

SERMONS

Preached upon

Several Occasions.

By WILLIAM WAKE, D. D.
Now Lord Archbishop of *Canterbury*.

V O L. II.



L O N D O N:

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SERMON

S E R M O N I.

Preached before the

QUEEN at *White-Hall*,
APRIL 2. 1690.

Being the *Fifth Wednesday* in LENT.



1 Tim. v. 22.

*Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither
be partaker of other mens sins.*



S AINT PAUL having planted a
Christian Church at *Ephesus*, and be-
ing called by his *Apostolick Charge* to
Preach the Gospel to other Places al-
so, settles *Timothy* there to supply
what was yet wanting to the full Establishment
of it; and not long after his departure, sends him
this *Epistle* to instruct him how he should *behave*
himself in the house of God^a, and fulfil that
great Trust which was committed to him therein.

^a 1 Tim. iii. 15.

In the *Verses* before the *Text*, we find him directing this Holy man, how he should proceed in inflicting the *Censures* of the *Church* upon *Offenders*; viz. That he should *First* admonish them *openly*, in the presence of the *whole Congregation*^b; That so both they who had Sinned, might be the more earnestly moved to *Repent* themselves of it; and that others being terrified thereby, might have the greater care how they fell into the like *Sins*, lest they also became exposed to the same *Correction*, *ŷ. 20. Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear.*

²^{dly}. That he should proceed in these judgments Uprightly, and Sincerely; without Partiality, without Fear of, or Favour to any, *ŷ. 21. I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect Angels, that thou observe these things*; that is, that thou proceed according to these *Rules*, in executing the *Discipline* of the *Church* upon *Offenders*; *without preferring one before another*; or, as our *Margin* reads it^c, *without prejudice, doing nothing by partiality.*

Lastly, That having tied any man by the *Censures* of the *Church*, he should have a care not to make too much haste to loose him again, and *Restore* him to the *Communion* of it; but should diligently enquire into, and prove his *Repentance*: Lest by his easiness in receiving Sinners into Favour, he should lessen their Fear and Apprehension of Sinning, and so bring upon him-

^b 2 Cor. ii. —6. Chryf. Hom. xv. in 1 Tim.

^c Gr. *χωρίς προειρησίας*.

self the *Guilt* of those Crimes which such an unwarrantable lenity would be like to encourage wicked men to commit ; when they should see how little it would cost them to expiate their *Sins*, and satisfy the Church for them, *Y. 22.*

Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other mens sins.

It is a difficulty that has somewhat divided both the Ancient, and Modern, Interpreters of this passage, To what it is that *the laying on of hands* here spoken of is to refer ? Whether to the *Admitting* of persons into *Holy Orders* in the Church ; or, as I have before explain'd it, to the *receiving Penitents* into the *Communion* of it ? For in both these *Cases* the Ancient Christians made use of this Ceremony of *Laying on of hands*.

If we understand the Exhortation of the *Text* with reference to the *Former* of these, the meaning of it will be this: That he should have a care diligently to *examine* the *Faith*, and to *enquire into* the *Lives*, and *Manners*, of those whom he admitted into any *Holy Office* or *Function* in the Church ; and see that they were duly qualified for it, according to those *Rules*^d which he had before so largely given him for that very purpose.

But tho' I shall not presume to censure this account of these *Words*, yet I must confess I think the *Latter Interpretation* of them which I be-

^d Chap. iii. 5.

fore gave, as it equally agrees with the expression of *St. Paul*, and with the *Primitive Custom* of *laying on Hands* upon those whom they received again into *Communion*, after having fulfilled the *Penance* impos'd upon them for their *Sins*; so does it seem more naturally to fall in with the rest of the *Apostle's* exhortation in that place. And the Consideration which he lays before him to engage him to this Care, is no other than what we find from hence transcribed sometimes into the *Penitential Canons* of the *Ancient Church*; namely, lest by his Remissness in this particular, he should have *Other Mens sins imputed to his account*; and be responsible to God, for all those Crimes which he neglected to punish with that severity he ought to have done.

But which soever of these *two* be the true meaning of *St. Paul's* charge in the former part of the *Text*, *Lay hands suddenly on no man*; the reason of it, in the latter, will be in both the same; namely, that *Timothy* by his negligence, in either of these *Cases*, would have render'd himself *Guilty of other mens sins*, and therefore ought to be very careful, and Circumspect, that he might not do so.

And this is the *Use* which I shall now make of *these Words*. It is a matter of sad, and serious Consideration, that we who labour, the very best of us, under so great a load of our *Own Sins*, should yet, as if that were not sufficient to ruine us, add every day a number of *Other mens* to them, to encrease our Account, and aggravate our
Condem-

Condemnation. There is I believe but seldom a day passes, wherein we do not some of us render our selves Guilty in this particular. I speak not now with reference to those, who not only live in an Habitual commission of the most heinous Sins themselves, but take a great deal of satisfaction, and even make it their daily Employment, to draw as many others as they can into the Commission of them: As if they meant to Emulate the impiety of those whom *St. Paul* has described, or rather branded in *Holy Scripture*, with this Detestable Character, *Rom. i. 32. That knowing the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in those that do them.*

No, a man need not rise up to such a height of Impiety, to render himself Guilty, in the sight of God, of *Other mens transgressions*. He may be so at a much lesser rate; and I fear upon such accounts, as the best of us shall hardly be able wholly to clear our selves of all concern in Them. I shall therefore make it my endeavour in a few reflexions to shew,

Ist. What those Circumstances are whereby we may be most likely to render our selves *partakers of other mens sins*? From whence it will appear,

II^{dly}. How careful we ought to be of *our selves*, and of *our Actions*, that we may keep our selves from being so. And,

Ist. Let us consider, what those *Circumstances* are, whereby we may render our selves *partakers of other mens sins*?

For the better clearing of which *Point*, I shall in the first place lay down this as a *Principle* out of all doubt; That *no man* becomes a *partaker* of the *Sins* of *another*, but by his *own Act*, *i. e.* by somewhat which himself does to involve his *Soul* in the *Guilt* of it. For *else*, as a great man among the *Heathens* themselves very well argued^e, *another mans wickedness might be my Evil*; which, says he, *God would not have, that it might not be in another mans power to make me unhappy*.

'Tis true indeed so great was the care of *God* heretofore to restrain the *Jews* from an *Idolatrous Worship*, that he threatned for this *Sin* to *visit the Iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children, unto the third and fourth Generation*^f; *i. e.* upon those who could not possibly have been in any manner accessory to their *Impieties*. But besides that there is a great deal of difference, between being *partakers of other mens Sins*, and being *Visited for them*; and that too only with some *Temporal Evils*, such as their own *Sins* had very well deserved: We are plainly assured by *God* himself, *Ezekiel xviii.* that even this complaint should be taken away; That the *Children* should not bear the *Iniquity of their fathers, neither the fathers of their Children, but the*

^e Marc. Ant. L. viii. §. 53.

^f II^d Com.

Soul that sinned it should die. And in all the accounts we meet with in the *New Testament* of the *judgment to come*, we are expressly told that every man shall *receive according to his own works*; or, as our *Apostle* has Phrased it, *Gal. vi. 5. Every man shall bear his own Burden.*

It remains therefore that no one either becomes *partaker* of the *Guilt* of another mans *Sins* now, or shall be *Punish'd* for them hereafter, any farther than he has by some *Circumstance* or other render'd himself accessary thereunto. And our present business must be to enquire by how many ways a man may do so? Now those are in *General* these three:

- (1.) By giving *Occasion* to other mens *sins*.
- (2.) By *Approving* of them when *Committed*.
And
- (3.) By neglecting to *hinder* them from *committing* them, when we *might*, and ought to have done it.

- (1.) A man may become a *partaker* of *Other mens Sins*, by giving *Occasion* to the *Committing* of them.

This is in *General* so very clear that I do not know that it has ever been *denyed*, or *doubted* of, by any. But now how many *ways* a man may become so far the *Occasion* of *another's Sin*, as to render himself thereby a *partaker* in the *Guilt* of

it, I shall not undertake precisely to define. I will offer some of those that are the most obvious, and particularly reflected on as such in the *Holy Scriptures*.

And First, It cannot be doubted but that He who *Contrives* the *Commission* of any *Sin*, and either by his *Authority* over any other Commands, or else by his *Arguments*, and *Insinuations*, Persuades him to commit it; does thereby render himself *partaker* of it.

This was the *case* of *David* in the business of *Uriah*, 2 *Sam.* chap. xi, xii. When having committed *Adultery* with *Bathsheba*, and not knowing otherwise how to prevent the *scandal* of it; he order'd *Joab*, who then commanded the Royal Army before *Rabbah*, to set *Uriah* her husband in the fore front of the hottest *Battel*, that he might be smitten and dye^h; and so he might take *Bathsheba* to be his *Wife*. But tho' *Joab* therefore executed the Command, and the Enemy slew him as he had projectedⁱ; yet *God* charges neither the one, nor the other of them, with his *Death*: He lays the whole Guilt of his Blood at the King's door, who had been the *Occasion* of it; 2 *Sam.* xii. 9. *Wherefore*, says the *Prophet*, *hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite, with the sword^k:—Thou hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.* And then he goes on in the next verses

^h 2 *Sam.* xi. 15.

ⁱ —17

^k 2 *Sam.* xii. 9.

to pronounce Judgment against him upon the account of it; *Now therefore the sword shall not depart from thy house¹: Behold I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house; and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lye with thy wives in the sight of this sun^m: For thou didst it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before this sunⁿ.*

And accordingly, upon this Admonition, we find David himself confessing his Sin, and imploring God's forgiveness, *ŷ. 13. And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord^o. And in that great Penitential Psalm, Psal. li. composed on purpose to be a standing memorial in the House of God of his Humiliation and Repentance for this very sin, he particularly acknowledges himself guilty of the murder of Uriah, and deprecates God's anger upon the account of it, ŷ. 14. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God! thou God of my Salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness^p.*

The truth is, such a one as this, is for the most part more guilty of the Sin committed, than he who was either over-awed, or perswaded, into the Commission of it. For tho' every man ought to have such a care of himself, and such a concern for his duty, as not to suffer either the Authority of the Greatest Person, or the Insinuations of the Dearest Friend in the world, to be able to

¹ 2 Sam. xii. 10.

^m — 11.

ⁿ — 12.

^o — 13.

^p Psal. li. 14.

prevail with him in a matter where the *Glory* of *God*, and the *Salvation* of his own *Soul*, are at stake: Yet there is a certain *easiness*, and *tendernefs*, in our *natures*, that not only too much exposes us to be overcome by such persons as we have either a very great *value* for, or have otherwise been very much *obliged* to, and do what we ought not, out of a false and unreasonable regard to them; but does also render us many times extremely *pityable*, tho' not *excusable*, in the doing of it. Whilst he who thus executes the office of the *Devil*; *projects* the *Villany*, and *prompts* us to the *Execution* of it, must remain utterly *inexcusable* in the sight both of *God*, and *Man*, for his *Impiety*.

But Secondly, A man may be the *occasion* of anothers sin, and so become *Partaker* of it, tho' he does not in so eminent a *degree* as this concur to it; if he does but in any other manner truly and effectually assist him in the committing of it.

Now this may be done many ways: As,

I. By contributing a *helping hand* to the doing of it: Upon which account it was a Constitution of the *Roman Law*, That if one committed a *Theft* by the assistance of another^a; as for instance, If one set a *ladder ready*, or left a *door open*, that another might go in, and steal his neighbours goods; he was adjudged thereby to

^a Inst. L. iv. Tit. 1. §. Interdum.

be *partaker* of the *Crime*, and stood liable to the same *Punishment* that the other did, who *committed the Robbery*.

And the same must be said, 2^{dly}. of him who *counsels* and *advises* another to any *sin*; and thereby puts him upon the *Execution* of it: As if, for example, a man should by some plausible arguments persuade another in necessity, to supply his Own wants by *stealing* from, or *defrauding* his Neighbour of his Goods.

But especially, 3^{dly}. If he not only in *general* *advises* him to do this, but in *particular*, *points* out to him a fair occasion, to put his *advice* in execution. As if, for instance, he should not only counsel him in *General* to *steal*, but should moreover tell him where a *good Booty* was to be had? How he might get into his *Neighbour's House*? What *time* would be the most *proper* for it? And in *what part* of the *House* he should find what he went for?

Nay but 4^{thly}. Tho' a man should not go so far as this, nor be at all *guilty* of *helping*, or *advising*, his neighbour to do *Evil*; yet If he *gives* his *Consent* to it; If he encourages him in the *Performance*, and approves his doing of it; He does even by this render himself *partaker* of the *Guilt* of it.

'Tis upon this account that St. *Austin*^r charges St. *Paul* with the Death of the *Blessed Stephen*^t. He was none of the *Witnesses* against him, nor

^r Serm. de Sanctis. i, iv, v.^t Acts xxii. 20.

did he *throw one Stone* at him. But he was *standing by, and consenting unto his death; and he kept the raiment of them that slew him^s.* And by doing of this he rendred himself no less *Guilty* than the most zealous of those that appeared against him. Others cast the *Stones* at him; but *St. Paul* slew him by their hands.

The Sum of this *Second Remark* is, in short, this: That whatsoever the Means be by which any one *assists* another in his *Wickedness*; if he *knows* the thing to be *Evil*, and yet still goes on to *promote, and encourage, the Execution* of it; He *sins* thereby against his *own Soul*; and shall render an Account to *God* for every such *Crime*, as any Other shall have *committed* by his *Help and Assistance*.

But I must go yet farther: For,

Thirdly, A Man may be adjudged by *God* to be the *Occasion* of *other mens Sins*, and as such to *partake* in them, tho' he does not thus *directly* contribute to the *Execution* of them. And that especially by these *two ways*: * By his *wicked Doctrine*; and, * By the *Scandal, and Influence, of a bad Example*: By either of which, if another be led into *Sin*, we find the Person who conduced but even thus far towards it, nevertheless charged by *God* as *Partaker* of it.

First, He that advances any *wicked Doctrine*, whereby either to *deceive* Men into the *commis-*

^s Acts xxii. 20.

tion of Sin, or to strengthen them in it, do's thereby render himself *Partaker* of their *Evil-doings*.

It was a sad Complaint which God once made against the *Prophets* of old, *Ezek. xiii.* That they *prophefied falſly in his Name*, and *ſeduced his people*, by *palliating their Vices*, and *sowing Pillows under their Arms*, and not ſuffering them to ſee their *Danger*; ſaying ſtill *Peace, peace*, when *there was no Peace*. But God denounces a terrible Judgment againſt them for their ſo doing, at the third and following *Verses*: *Thus ſaith the LORD, Wo unto the fooliſh Prophets that follow their own ſpirit, and have ſeen nothing. Who ſay, The LORD ſaith, and the Lord hath not ſent them. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD God; My hand ſhall be upon the Prophets that ſee Vanity, and that divine Lies; and I will accompliſh my Wrath upon them, to wit, upon the Prophets of Iſrael, which propheſie concerning Jeruſalem, and ſee Viſions of Peace for her, and there is no Peace, ſaith the LORD God.*

It would, I fear, be a melancholy Reflexion to conſider, how many of theſe kind of *Prophets* there are at this time among us, who by *false Principles*, and *miſtaken Notions* of *Chriſtianity*, that I do not add, and by their *new Systems* both of *Faith*, and *Morality*, fall under

^t Ezek. xiii. 3, &c.

the same Censure, and thereby expose their *Souls* to *Ruine* and *Destruction*.

But indeed, What Other Account can we give of all those *Principles*, and *Doctrines*, whereby some *extenuate* the *Danger*, others *cover over* the very *Nature* of *Sin*? Some lead men *ignorantly* into it, by teaching them that what is indeed unlawful, may *innocently* be done by them; Others let them see and know what they do, but then tell them they run no great hazard in the doing of it: A little *Sorrow*, and *Confession* at the last, and all is secure. Or should the worst that can happen, yet alas! *Hell* is no such dreadful Place as 'tis commonly misapprehended to be: It being unreasonable to think that *God* should punish a few *Temporary* Sins, with *Everlasting* Torments. In short That 'tis but to *die*, and *perish*, and *enjoy nothing*; and why then should a man trouble himself with the *Restraints* of *Religion* now, when he has so little to apprehend, and be afraid of, hereafter?

But let such Men as these know, that it is not a light Offence that they commit in all this. There is a time coming when they shall render a severe Account for these their Delusions: And undergo a *Punishment* not only proportionable to their *Own Sins*, but to all that *Deluge* of *Evil* which by such *Principles* as these, has broke in upon the *World* in these latter days.

It was one of those great Evils for which *God* pronounced that severe Denuntiation against the *Jews* heretofore, *Isaiah* v. 20. *That they call'd*
Evil

*Evil Good, and Good Evil; they put Dark-
ness for Light, and Light for Darknes; Bit-
ter for Sweet, and Sweet for Bitter: that is,
they confounded the Natures of Things, destroy-
ed all Distinction betwixt Good and Evil, Vertue
and Vice; they ran down Piety as a vain Pra-
ctice, and recommended Profaneness, as true Gal-
lantry and Bravery: Therefore as the fire de-
voureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the
chaff; so their root shall be rottenness, and their
blossom shall go up as dust; because they have cast
away the Law of the LORD of Hosts, and
despised the Word of the Holy One of Israel^u.*

*Secondly, A Man may become the Occasion,
and partake of Other mens Sins, as by his Evil
Doctrine, so also by the Scandal, and Influence,
of a Bad Example.*

And that, whether, he thereby designs to
lead them into Sin, or has not the least desire,
much less intention, so to do. For Sin being
always scandalous, and apt to give offence, He
who do's any thing that he ought not, and there-
by draws his Brother from his Duty; must an-
swer to God not only for the Evil that he did,
but for all the Consequences of it, to the deceiv-
ing of any Other into the like Guilt. And thus
the Holy Scripture not only condemns Je-
roboam for making Israel to sin, upon the ac-
count of the Calves that he set up in Dan and
Bethel, on purpose to draw them away from the

^u Isaiah v. 24.

true Worship of God: 1 Kings xii. 28. *It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; Behold thy Gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the Land of Egypt:* But represents St. Peter to us as Guilty of leading the Gentile Converts into Error; tho' by complying, as he did, with the Judaizing Christians, he design'd only to condescend to their weakness, and not to give any the least cause of Offence to any Others.

The Case was in short this: There were in those first times many among the Jews who tho' they readily embraced the Gospel of Christ, yet could not presently perswade themselves that they ought to abandon all the Rites and Ceremonies of their own Law. With these therefore the Apostles thought fit to bear for a while, and to permit them to observe their former Customs, as far as was consistent with the Nature of Christianity so to do. But for the Gentile Converts, those, who had never been at all subject to the Law, to them they preach'd a Gospel liberty, and exhorted them not to submit themselves to any such burden.

St. Peter being at Antioch, in a Church which St. Paul had establish'd of this latter sort, freely for a time communicated with them; not making any distinction of Meats, or Drinks, nor at all observing the Law of Moses in any of those things. But it happen'd whilst he was there, that certain Brethren came down from the Church of Jerusalem to him, who were still zealous for the Law; and in compliance with these,

these, He began, whilst they were with Him, to alter his manner of living, and no longer to use his former liberty; but to live after the manner of the Jews: He withdrew, says St. Paul, and separated himself, fearing them of the circumcision^w.

This example of his led many of the Jewish Converts, who before had lived in all freedom with the Gentiles, into the like Abstinence; inso-much that Barnabas himself was carried away with the dissimulation^x; and so began to raise some doubts, and disturbances, in that Church. But St. Paul reprov'd him openly before them all: He charged him that he did not walk uprightly according to the Truth of the Gospel: He withstood him to the face^y, and tells us plainly He was to be blamed: And that for Compelling the Gentiles to live as do the Jews^z; i. e. for encouraging them to it, and perswading them falsely by his example, that it was necessary for them so to do.

It is in the Case of Sin now, as it was in that of an involuntary injury under the Law. If a Man open'd, or digged a pit, and neglected to cover it, and another man's Oxe, or Ass, fell therein^b; tho' he made it only for his own use, and had not the least design of doing thereby any prejudice to his Neighbour, yet because he did not take due care to fence it^c, and prevent all occasion of harm from happening by it, he was to

^w Gal. ii. — 12. ^x — 13. ^y — 14. ^z — 11.
^a — 14. ^b Exod. xxi. 33. ^c — 34.

repair his Neighbour's damage, and give Money to him for the *Oxe*, or *Ass*, and the *dead beast was to be his*.

And so here; If a Man do's any thing that may be apt to lead another into *Sin*, and takes not that due care he ought to prevent his being *deceived* by it, and another be thereby encouraged to do Evil, he shall answer for his neglect: And if his *Action* was not barely *scandalous*, but *sinful* too; *Evil* in its self, as well as *apt* to draw others into *Sin*; he shall be called to an account before *God* not only for his Own, but also for his Neighbour's *Soul*; and his *Sin* shall be required yet one fold more of him for the occasion it gave to his Brother to do wickedly.

There is yet one way more whereby a Man may give occasion to, and so *partake of other Mens Sins*, and which comes yet nearer to the *Case of Timothy* in the *Text*, than any I have hitherto named; and that is,

Fourthly; By advancing *Evil Men* to *Places of Trust*, and *Power*, and thereby giving them opportunity to do much more Mischief, than they could have done in a *private Capacity*.

I need not say how great a part of the *Calamities* under which the World now labours might be prevented, were none but Men of *great Integrity*, and *Abilities* suitable to the Station to which they are called, ever permitted to have any Rule or Authority, either in *Civil*, or *Religious* concerns. Such as these, would not only not do any Hurt themselves, but would in a little

the time either by their *Influence* and *Example*, or else by a due *severity* against *Offenders*, restrain others from doing it. But *when the Blind lead the Blind*; When they who should teach, and make others *Good*, are not *Good* themselves; what wonder if we see so little *sense* of *Piety* among the *People*, when there is so little of it among those that should set them an *Example*?

It is therefore certainly a *Great Care* that those ought to have whose concern it is to provide that none but *Honest*, and *Worthy*, Men be admitted into such *Stations*, where, if they are inclined to be Evil, they may do a great deal of mischief to those below them. And if instead of having such a *Care*, as far as is possible, not to suffer any wicked and profligate Persons to receive any Favour or Countenance from them, they shall either take no *Care* at all, or it may be (which has sometimes happen'd) be well-enough contented that the *vilest Wretches* should be the most honour'd, and promoted by them; what less can they expect than to answer for those *Sins*, which such Men, by their means, have the *Opportunity* to *Commit*?

When *Jeroboam*, whom we before mention'd, had set up his *two Calves* in *Dan* and *Bethel*, and exhorted the People no more to go up to *Jerusalem*, but to worship the *Gods* which he had made for them; we read, 1 *Kings* xiii. 33. that for the better carrying on his design, he provided *Priests for them of the lowest of the people*; such as he thought fit for his purpose, that would

be ready for any thing he should command them to do; *whosoever would he consecrated Him, and he became one of the Priests of the High-places.* And how heinously God resented this, we may see in the very next *Verse*; *And this thing became sin unto the House of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the Earth^d.*

But because the Great Aggravation of *Jeroboam's Sin* was that he admitted such Fellows into the *Priest-hood* on purpose to *debase Religion*, and confirm the *People* in the *Idolatry* which he designed to establish among them; We will look farther to the *Instance* of the *Text*, where neither of these things can be supposed. Here the only fault we can imagine *Timothy* was capable of being Guilty of, must have been the not being so *careful*, and *circumspect* as he ought, in *trying*, and *examining*, such Persons as he admitted into any *Holy Office* in the *Church*. And yet *St. Paul* having exhorted him to this Care in the *former part of the Text*, (if we take his words in that *sense* in which they are more generally understood;) *Lay hands suddenly on no man*; makes use of this consideration to enforce it upon Him in the *latter*, that otherwise he should be responsible to *God* for all that mischief which should accrue to the *Church* by the means of such persons as he admitted into the *Government* of it, without that due Caution he ought to have used in

^d 1 Kings xiii. 34.

a matter of such importance; *Neither be thou partaker of other mens sins.*

I shall conclude this *point* with that advice which the *Heathen Orator* once gave to his Friend: *If you should ever come to be in Authority*, says he, *Employ no wicked Person in any of your Affairs; for whatsoever faults He commits, the blame will be sure to fall on you^e.*

And this may serve for the *first way* whereby we may become *partakers of other Mens Sins*, viz. by *giving Occasion* to the *Committing* of them.

The (2^d.) is, By our *Approving* of them *when Committed*.

And this too is a *Circumstance* which renders a Man not only *partaker of another's Sin*, but oftentimes more *heinously guilty* than He who committed it^f. A Man may fall into *Sin* by *Ignorance*, or *Surprise*; may be hurried on by his *Passions*, and carried away in such a manner by the *violence of temptation*, as not to be able to command Himself, and to withstand the force of them. And this, tho' it will not *altogether excuse*, yet will *lessen and extenuate* a Man's *Guilt*; will render him tho' not *innocent*, yet not *extremely ill*: He may *Commit the Sin*, and yet be so far from being *pleased* with it, that he may *abhor himself for Committing* of it.

But there can be no *Excuse* for any one to *justify*, and *approve*, what he *knows to be Evil*. Here is no room for *passion*, or *surprise*; In

^e *Isochr. ad Dem. n. 30.*

^f *Chrysost. in Rom. Hom. v. pag. 46, 47.*

short, it must be the Evidence of a *Soul* harden'd in wickedness, not only to *do* what is *Evil*, but to *take pleasure* in it; and to *applaud*, and *encourage*, the practice of it.

Now two ways there are whereby we may declare our *Approbation* of another's *Sin*; and by both, but especially by the former of which, we shall be sure to render our selves *partakers* of it: *viz.*

1st. By making some *Advantage* to our selves by it.

2^{dly}. By *Justifying*, and *Applauding* of it to others.

1st, By making some *Advantage* to our selves by it.

This was the *Case* of *Ahab* in the business of *Naboth*, and for which *God* charges him with all the *Murder* and *Oppression*, that without his *Knowledge*, or *Direction*, had been committed in it, 1 *Kings* xxi. He desired by any means to have purchased *Naboth's Vineyard*, and he was very much discontented that he could not persuade Him to part with it. *He laid him down upon his Bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread*; but it does not appear that he design'd by any unjust Violence to ravish it from Him.

But his *Wife* wrote Letters to the *Elders* of

his City, and commanded them saying; *Proclaim a Fast, and set Naboth on high among the people^h: and set two men, sons of Belial, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God, and the King; and then carry him out, and stone him that he may dieⁱ.*

This they did, and put him to death accordingly^k: And then the Queen first made her Husband acquainted with what was done^l. But what then was *Ahab's Crime*? Why, he received the News with satisfaction; he was pleased with what had pass'd; and he rose up from his bed, and went down to take possession of the Vineyard^m. And for this God charges him by *Elijah* with all the Violence that, without his knowledge, had been before committed: *Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? therefore In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thineⁿ.*

The truth is, so great is the Equity of this Proceeding, that we find even the positive Laws of most Countries, to observe the same measure. He that conceals a Thief, and receives what is stolen, and partakes with him in his Booty; shall, if discovered, be look'd upon as if he had committed the Theft: And therefore Solomon says of such a one, *Prov. xxix. 24. That he hateth his own Soul*, that is, He puts his Life in danger by it. And for what concerns the Conscience, is even by the Heathen Moralists themselves adjudged

^h 1 Kings xxi. 9. ⁱ — 10. ^k — 11. ^l — 15.
^m — 16. ⁿ — 19.

as much a *Thief* as the other°. And the Reason of this is clear, Because by joining with the *Sinner* at the last, and *partaking* with him in the *Advantage* for which the Villany was committed, instead of correcting him for it himself, or bringing him forth to a publick Punishment; he plainly declares his *Consent* to what was done, and both *preserves* him, and *encourages* him to do the like again.

Nay but, 2^{dly}, Tho' we should not make any *Advantage* to our selves by the *Sins* of others; yet our very *justifying* and *applauding* of them, would, of its self, be sufficient to render *us partakers of them*.

The Malignity of *Sin* lies not so much in what we do, as in the *Affections* of the *Heart*, the *Will* and *Intention* with which we do it. The *outward Act* may *accidentally* add indeed to the *Aggravation* of our *Guilt*: But 'tis the *Heart* and the *Affections* of that, to which *God* principally looks; and for which we shall either be *acquitted* or *condemn'd* at the last day. A man may do that which is in it self very *innocent*, and yet commit a great *Sin* by doing it, if he *thought* it to be *Evil*, and yet did it. And on the other side, there are such *Circumstances* wherein what is in its self *unlawful*, may yet without *Sin* be done by us, if a man were *invincibly*, and therefore *excusably*, *ignorant* that it was so.

° Ἀμφοτέρῃ κλώπις, καὶ ὁ κλεψάμενος, καὶ ὁ κεύψας. Phocyl.

He that *loves* any *Evil*, and wishes for an *Opportunity* to commit it, and would be sure to embrace it if he had, is already *guilty* of it, tho' he should never find the *Opportunity* he desires for it. Thus in the *Instances* which our *Saviour Christ* himself gives us, *Matth. v.* He that looks upon a woman to lust after her, has already committed adultery with her in his heart^p: He that is angry with his brother^q, and would do him a mischief if he could, is already a *Murderer*, though he never should be able to strike a dagger into his Breast. And therefore in the *Case* before us; If when a *Sin* is done by another, We are pleased with it, we commend the *Fact*, and so declare our selves to be in our *Hearts* consenting to it; we evidently thereby, as far as concerns our *Will*, and *Inclinations*, bear a *part* in it; and shall accordingly be accounted in *God's* sight to have a share in the *Guilt* of it.

Hence it is that we may observe, how studious Good men have always shewed themselves, in flying the very *Conversation* of *Sinners*: As if their keeping company with *Evil* men, should seem to some an *Approving* of their *Evil* Actions. It was the Resolution of *Holy David*, *Psal. ci.* that he would not suffer any wicked man to stand before him, to dwell in his House, or receive the least *Favour* and *Countenance* from him. And in the *cxixth Psalm*, *Y. 115.* he makes it the *Consequence* of his own resolving to be Good, to

p Mat. v. 28.

q ——— 22.

drive all such from him as would not be so in like manner with him: *Depart from me ye Evil-doers, I will keep the Commandments of my God.*

And the same was the Advice which St. Paul gave to the *Corinthians*, 1 Ep. v. 11. He bids them not to keep company with a *wicked Christian*: *If any man, says he, that is called a Brother, be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner, with such a One no not to Eat.* And again, in his 2^d to *Timothy*, c. iii. having set down a *large Catalogue* of *Sinners* that should rise up in the *latter days*; he bids us, *ŷ. 5. From such turn away.* And St. John in his 2^d *Epistle*, having given the same Advice to the *Person* to whom he there writes, that if any of those who had *deny'd the Faith of Christ*^r, after having been once made acquainted with it, should come to her, *she should not receive them into her house, nor bid them God speed*^s; subjoins this very thing as the Reason of it, *For he that biddeth them God speed, is partaker of their Evil deeds*^r.

And tho' I should be very unwilling to pronounce any thing rashly in a *Matter* of such a *Nature*, and am sensible there are many *Cases*, some wherein a man cannot avoid having to do with *wicked men*, as in the *Common Concerns* and *Affairs* of this *World*; Others in which a man may worthily keep company with them, as our

^r 2 Ep. Jo. vii.

^s ——— 10.

^r 2 Ep. Jo. xi.

Saviour did with the *Publicans* and *Sinners* heretofore, the better to gain an Opportunity to reclaim their *Manners*, and convert them from their *Evil ways*: Yet I cannot but think it worth the while of a *Christian* to consider with himself, how he will otherwise be able to excuse himself hereafter to *God Almighty*, that he has received, loved, embraced, the most profligate *Sinners*; shewn his *Favour* and *Countenance* to the most daring *Rebels* against *Piety*, and *Religion*; and delighted in the *Conversation* of those now, whose *Portion* he deprecates, and whose *Companion* he would be very unwilling to become at all adventures hereafter. Nay perhaps has done yet more than this; has loved them for their very *Vices*; been pleased with their *Profaneness* and *Debauchery*; and smiled sometimes at those *Sins* in others, which he would have been ashamed to commit himself.

But I must not insist upon all these things: and therefore,

3^{dly}. And to conclude this whole matter; The last *Circumstance*, whereby we may become *partakers of other mens Sins*, is, By neglecting to hinder them from committing them, when we might, and ought, to have done it.

Now tho' this be a *circumstance* which seems more especially to regard those whom *God* hath set up as *Watchmen* over the *House of Israel*, yet is there no one that must think himself altogether unconcern'd in it. We all of us I hope have, I am sure we all of us should have, the same

same *Zeal* for the *Glory of God*, and the same *Charity* for the *Salvation* of one anothers *Souls*. And tho' God has indeed in a particular manner appointed some certain Persons to *watch* more than others for your *Salvation*, and to call upon you to look to your selves, and not give way to the *Tempter*; yet whosoever he be that sees another about to do that which he knows will be *odious* to God, *scandalous* to Good men, and without a timely *Repentance* ruinous to his own *Soul*, and has an opportunity to admonish him of his *Sin*, and to *hinder* his *committing* of it, and yet neglects so to do; let him fear, lest what God once declared to the *Prophet Ezekiel* heretofore, be finally verified in himself; c. xxxiii. 8. *When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his Iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand.*

But though we are therefore all of us obliged, as we tender our own *Souls*, to do what we can in our several Capacities to save others; and in order thereunto should *hinder* them from *sinning*, whenever it lies in our power so to do: Yet it is not to be doubted, but that such persons as either by *Nature*, or *Friendship*, or any the like Engagement, ought to have a more particular concern than others, for their Neighbour's Welfare; or else by their *Place*, and *Business*, and *Character*, are engaged in a more especial manner to *watch* over them; should be more than ordinarily careful

ful as to this matter, and will have much more than others to answer for, if they be not.

Now two ways in *general* there are, whereby such persons must labour to *hinder* Men from *sinning*, as ever they mean to clear themselves from being *Partakers* in their *Iniquities*.

First, By *discouraging Sin* all they can *before it be committed*: By setting forth the present *Folly*, and *Unreasonableness* of it, and the great danger that shall certainly be the consequence of it hereafter: By shewing the *Vanity* of all those little *Pretences*, in which *wicked Men* are apt to put their *trust*; and not leaving them any *hopes* of *Impunity*, either in this World, or in the next, without a *true Repentance* of their *Sins*, and a *Forsaking* of them.

Secondly, By a severe *Enquiry* into, and *Punishment* of it, after. This indeed is what the great *Temper*, and *Moderation* of our present *Discipline*, that I do not say some Defect in it, permits not us, as *St. Paul* here commanded *Timothy*, to do. We cannot call *Sinners* publicly into the *Church*, and lay open their *Crimes* to them, and *rebuke them before All*, that others also may fear. But the *Civil Magistrate* has great opportunities of supplying this *Defect*; and no doubt God will require it so much the more at his hands, in that it is now no longer in ours. There is indeed a *Mercy* to be remembered, and shewn in *Judgment*; and our own *Frailty* ought to admonish us to make great Allowances for other mens *Infirmities*. But there may be an Excess
even

even in *Good Nature* it self; and whatever the Consequence be, care must be taken that neither the *Honour* of *God* be profan'd, nor his *Laws* despised; that neither *Virtue* be *run down*, nor *Vice* encouraged: And to that end, Men must be kept from *open*, and *scandalous Sins*, at least, if they cannot from others; and be punish'd even in *Mercy* now, that they may be reform'd, and not *perish for ever*.

And let us then

II^{dly}. Which was the other *general point* we proposed to consider (the consequent *Application* of all these *Reflections*) be perswaded to endeavour, what in us lies, to *prevent* both our *own*, and *other mens Sins*. Instead of *Approving*, and *Encouraging*, any in their *Wickedness*, let us, as our *Apostle* advises, *Heb. x. 24. Consider one another to provoke unto love, and to good works*. Instead of giving them any occasion, or laying any *stumbling-block* in their way, whereby to lead them into *Sin*, let us by our good Example both teach them what they ought to do, and, if possible, make them in *love* with it: And look upon our selves to lie under the same Engagement to *God* for one another, that *Judah* once took upon himself for his Brother *Benjamin*, *Gen. xliii. 9. Of my hand shalt thou require him; if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever*.

I am

I am sensible that I am now exhorting you to a *Duty* but very little, if at all, consider'd by most Men. They think it to be enough for them to *search out their own Souls*, and account with God for their own Miscarriages: And may perhaps be ready to complain of this as some new Contrivance against their *Liberty*, to call upon them to *repent* for *other Men's sins*. But if the *Case* be indeed so as the *Text* plainly implies, and as I think I may presume to say, I have in some measure made it appear to be: If there be many ways by which we may, and by some or other of which it is probable the very best of us have rendred our selves *partakers of other Mens sins*: Then I am sure it must remain, that we have a concern to look beyond our own particular Offences; and to enquire to how many *sins* of others we may have contributed by any of those means I have before mentioned; and the less we have been wont to do this heretofore, it will argue the greater, not lesser, necessity for us to set very seriously about it now.

It is indeed an amazing Reflection to sit down and think, How much more *Guilt* we may possibly contract by every *sin* that we commit, than we are any of us *willing* to believe, or it may be able to comprehend. For not to say any thing at all of those common *Aggravations*, which we are every where taught to *examine* our selves about: Such as *sinning* against *Knowledge*, against the *Checks* of our own *Consciences*, and the *Motions* of God's Holy Spirit to the contrary: *Sin-*
8
ning

ning against often repeated Promises, against the most serious Resolutions, against the most solemn and sacred Vows of Obedience: In a word, Sinning against many providential Admonitions; such as Trouble, Afflictions, Losses, Sickness, and the like; sent by God on purpose to reclaim us. Let us consider only this one thing now before us, How many Men our sinning may be the Ruin of? How many souls may, for ought we know, perish through our fault? And what a desperate increase this must add to our own Guilt? For if he who converts a sinner from the Error of his way", and so is instrumental to the saving but of one soul from death, shall for that cover a multitude of his own sins: O! then, how fatally must we multiply evil against our selves, when by our neglect of our duty we lead perhaps Multitudes into Sin, and Error, and involve their souls in everlasting Destruction.

If we have therefore hitherto neglected so serious a Consideration; If our Repentance has been only for the sins we our selves have committed, without any regard to the Mischief we may have done our Brother by them; Let us now at least be persuaded to think that we have yet one great part of our Humiliation still behind; viz. to deprecate God's Wrath not only for our selves, but for others also; and implore his Forgiveness of all those sins which have ever by our means been committed by any in the world; and that

" James v. 19, 20.

would not impute them either to their, or our, Damnation.

This if we do with that affectionate earnestness as becomes so great an *Aggravation*, I am persuaded we shall not only very much *increase* our *Contrition*, and so *perfect* our *Repentance*, for *what* is *past*; but may also by the *Grace of God*, establish our selves the better against *returning* to our *Evil Ways* for the *Time* to come: And our desires not to *partake in other Men's sins*, be improved into one good *Motive* more to keep us from continuing in our own.

I shall *conclude* this Discourse, after the *same manner*, and almost in the *same Words* that St. *Basil* once did his *Canonical Epistle to Amphilo- chius*, upon the occasion of that very Reflection we have now been making.

“ Let ^w us, says he, consider the terrible Judg-
“ ments of *God*, and the day of his Appearing,
“ and let us fear lest we perish in other mens Sins.

“ Let us call to mind the Admonitions of God
“ to us; What Evils we have been exposed to;
“ What Calamities we have suffered: And let
“ these convince us, That for the Iniquities of our
“ Lives we have been forsaken by him.

“ Our People have been led into Captivity, our
“ Brethren dispersed far and near: Because those
“ who profess the *Name of Christ*, have yet li-
“ ved so contrary to their *Profession*.

^w Bevereg. *Evod.* Tom. II. p. 367.

“ But if after all this Men will not understand,
“ that for these Causes the Wrath of God is come
“ upon us, wherefore should we have any thing
“ more to do with them ?

“ Nevertheless, let us not cease Day nor Night,
“ in Publick, and in Private, to intreat and beseech
“ them to consider these things; but let us not be
“ drawn away with their Wickedness.

“ Let us wish and pray, That if it shall please
“ God we may yet gain them at the last, and deliver
“ them out of the Snares of the Devil; but if this
“ we cannot do, yet at least let us save our own
“ Souls, tho’ we cannot theirs, and not partake
“ with them in their *sins*, lest we also partake with
“ them in their *Destruction*.



S E R M O N II.

Preached before the

LORD-MAYOR,

A N D

Court of Aldermen,

A T

St. SEPULCHRE's-Church,

On *Wednesday* in *Easter-Week*, 1690.

Gal. vi. 10.

As we have therefore Opportunity, let us do Good unto all Men, especially unto them that are of the Household of Faith.



SAINT PAUL having in the foregoing parts of this *Epistle* dispatched that *Subject* which was the Chief Occasion of his writing of it; and endeavour'd by many Arguments to perswade the *Galatians* not to suffer themselves

to be mislead by those False-Teachers who were crept in amongst them, into a needless, and even dangerous, mixture of the *Law of Moses* with the *Gospel of Christ*: Goes on in the *Close* of all, to exhort them to such *Practical Duties* as he thought most necessary to recommend to them in those *Circumstances* in which they then were.

It was the unhappiness of that *Church*, as it generally is of all Others in the like *Cases*, that their *diversity* of *Opinion*, as to the Point before-mentioned, had set up a *diversity* of *Parties*, and *Interests*, amongst them; and made them much more zealous for their own *particular Tenents*, in which they differ'd from one another, than for the *Common Faith and Doctrine of Christ*, in which they agreed together. Instead of *glorifying God* by a *Holy Life*, their business was to *tear and worry one another* about the *Ceremonies* of the *Law of Moses*^a. Religion was turned into *Disputing*; And he was accounted the best man, not who was the most careful to *live quietly*, and to *do his duty conscientiously*; but who was the most violent to *defend his Opinion*, and to *run down* all those that were of a *different Perswasion*.

In opposition to this furious, and contentious Spirit, Saint *Paul* having first determined the *Point* which occasioned all their difference, goes on in the next place to stir them up to such *Duties*, as he supposed would be most likely to re-

^a Gal. v. 15.

duce them to a *Christian Temper of Love, and Charity*, towards one another.

And 1st, Since the *Law* was that they were so zealous for, he desires them to reflect a little, what it was that the *Law* its self commanded them, Ch. v. 14. *For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self^b.*

2^{dly}, He represents to them, what the *present Consequence* of such *Contentions* would probably be: That while they thus quarrelled with one another, they would give a fair opportunity to the common Enemy to destroy them all, *ŷ. 15. But if ye bite, and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another^c.*

3^{dly}, He bids them consider, that *Hatred, Variance, Emulation, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, Envyings*, and such like^d; how fair soever the pretence may be of a concern for the *Honour of God*, and the *Interests of Religion*, are yet as much the *Works of the Flesh*, and as destructive of Salvation, as *Adultery*, or *Drunkenness*, or any other the like Immoralities. And that, if they would approve themselves truly zealous in his Service, they must do it by a quite contrary Practice: By their *Love, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Meekness^e*, and the like *Fruits* of that blessed Spirit, which evermore leads Men to be kind and charitable to one another.

^b *ŷ. 14.*

^c Ch. v. 15.

^d *ŷ. 16, 19, 20, &c.*

^e Ch. v. 22, 23, 24, 25.

And having thus given them these *General Cautions*, he finally adds two or three *particular Directions*, in such *Instances* wherein they seemed more especially to stand in need of his Advice.

As *First*, That they should not suffer their *differences* so far to transport them, as to make them be perpetually *quarrelling*, and *disputing* with one another. For that this would be a means rather to keep up their differences, and embitter their Spirits, and set them farther from Agreement, than conduce to the composing of them, *ſ. 26. Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another^f.*

Secondly, That much less should they indulge a peevish Temper so far, as to be glad of any occasion to expose one anothers *Sins*, and *Infirmities*^g; but rather should mutually endeavour to help, and *bear one anothers burdens*: And consider, that the best man in the World may some time or other be *tempted*, and *overtaken in a fault*, and so need the same *Charity*.

To this end, *Thirdly*, That they should learn to be *Humble*^h: And instead of comparing themselves with other men, and valuing themselves upon their being *Better*, or more *Orthodox*, than their Neighbours; should examine themselves by the *Rule* of their *Duty*, and see how they stood with relation to that: And remember, that when

^f Ch. v. 26.

^g Chap. vi. 1, 2.

^h *ſ. 3.*

we come before God in Judgment, the Enquiry will not be, whether we have not exceeded some others in our Piety, but whether we have lived so as we our selves might, and ought to have done, *ſ. 5. For every man ſhall bear his own burden.*

Fourthly and laſtly, That above all, they ſhould not ſuffer their *differences* in other things, to abate their *Charity*, or make them ever the leſs ready in all *Good Offices*, whether to their *Teachers*, or to *one another*. But ſhould conſider, that the Time is coming when God will call us to *give an account of our ſtewardſhip*ⁱ; how we have employed thoſe *Talents* he has committed to us. That then they who have been ſo wiſe as to manage them as they ought to do, ſhall receive a *Bleſſed Reward*: Whiſt thoſe who have minded only their Luſts, or their Interests; who have either hoarded up their *Riches* without *doing any Good* at all with them, or have ſpent them only in *Sin*, and *Extravagance*, ſhall be condemn'd to a miſerable ſtate of *Everlaſting Punishment*: And then concludes in the Words of the *Text*;

As we have therefore Opportunity, let us do good unto all men, eſpecially unto them who are of the houſhold of Faith.

From which Words I shall take Occasion to discourse on these Four *Points* :

Ist, Of that *general obligation* which our *Christian Profession* lays upon us to *Do Good*:
As we have therefore opportunity, let us
Do Good.

II^{dly}, Of the *Time*, and *Measure*, *When*, and
How far we ought so to do; *ὡς καὶ ἔχο-
μεν*, As we have Opportunity; According
to our Ability; for so also that Phrase may
well enough be understood.

III^{dly}, Of the *Persons* to whom this *Good* is to
be Done; to *All men*, especially to them
that are of the household of Faith.

IV^{thly}, Of the great Engagement we have to
do this, express'd in the *verse* before, from
which our *Text* is the Inference: *Let us not
be weary in well-doing, for in due season
we shall reap, if we faint not; As we
have therefore Opportunity, let us do Good
unto All men, especially unto them that are
of the household of Faith.*

I begin with the *First* of these;

Ist, The *general Obligation* which our *Religi-
on* lays upon us to *Do Good*.

For the better clearing whereof, I must observe,
That the *word* in the *Original* is very *emphati-
cal*; it signifies not barely the *doing good*, but
implies a care and choice in the *Doing* of it;
that

that we should do, *τὸ ἀγαθόν*, the Good, that particular Good, whatsoever it be, which another wants, and wherein we may be capable of lending our assistance to him.

Charity is a duty as *comprehensive*, as it is *excellent*: It extends its self to all sorts of Good Offices whereby we may at any time be able to serve our neighbour, and do any real act of kindness to him. And indeed since God designed that to *Do Good* should be the indispensable duty of all Christians, it was but necessary to give such a Latitude to it, that no Christian whatsoever might have just cause to complain that he was not in a capacity, in some way or other, of fulfilling it.

To run through all the several parts of this duty, and shew in how many Instances one man may be capable of *Doing Good* to another, were an undertaking as difficult, and infinite, as it would be to draw a Scheme of all the Miseries and Calamities, of all the Wants and Necessities, which any man ever did, or ever shall fall into in this world. Suffice it in general to say, That by whatsoever Act of ours we do in any wise promote either the *present Welfare*, or the *Eternal Happiness*, of our neighbour; do in any sort contribute to make him more easy, or comfortable in *this life*; or to further his everlasting felicity in *the other*; in that we discharge this Duty of *Doing Good* to him, and which there is no man so mean, or low in the World, but he may find frequent Opportunities of putting in practice.

But

But tho' this therefore be the general import of *Doing Good*, and the undoubted *duty* of every Christian; yet if we consider that expression according to the *style* of the *holy Scriptures*, we shall find it commonly used there in a more *limited sense*, to signify that particular kind of ^k *Doing Good*, which consists in *acts* of *Mercy* and *Beneficence*.

And so I conceive it is that we are in a more especial manner at least, to understand it in this place^l: And then taking this for the meaning of our *Apostle* in these *words*, I shall not need say much to shew what clear, and forcible obligations, our Religion has laid upon us, in this *sense* more particularly, to *do Good*. In short,

* If to have given the plainest and most express *Commands* for the *exercise* of such a *Charity*, and to have repeated those *Commands* more frequently, and to have enforced them more earnestly, than almost any other *Precepts* in the Gospel besides^m:

*ⁿ If to have set before us the *Practice* of it, as that whereby above all things we may the most nearly imitate the *Perfection* of God himself^o; and render him our debtor from whom we have received all, whatsoever we enjoy:

^k Acts x. 38. —ix. 36. 2 Cor. ix. 8. 2 Thessal. iii. 13. 1 Tim. v. 10. Ib. vi. 18. Tit. iii. 8, 14. Heb. xiii. 16, &c.

^l See Chrys. in Loc.

^m Matt. vi. 19. —xix. 21. Luke vi. 30. —xi. 41. —xii. 33. Rom. xii. 13. 2 Cor. viii. 7. Colos. iii. 12, &c.

ⁿ Mat. v. 48. comp. with S. Luke vi. 36.

^o Prov. xix. 17:

* If to have made our *Kindness*, and *Charity* to our *Neighbour*, the very mark whereby to try our *Love*, and *Duty* to *God*^p; and to have declared that no service we can do the One, shall be accepted, whilst we continue to neglect the Other: But above all,

* If not only to have promised the *Blessings* of *this life* to the practice of it^q, but to have set forth to us the great and final Inquest of the *Day of Judgment*, as depending in a manner entirely upon this one thing, and entailing either *Eternal Happiness*, or *Eternal Misery* upon us in the other World, according as we have been *Charitable*, or not, in this:

If, I say, all this may be thought sufficient to lay an obligation upon us to be very diligent and forward, in the discharge of any *Duty*, there is then none to which our *Religion* has been more careful to excite, and oblige us, than this of *Charity*; nor in which therefore a *Christian* will be less able to excuse himself, if, after all, he shall still continue to neglect the performance of it.

But of the *Obligations* which we lie under thus to *Do Good*, I shall have occasion to speak more fully in the *Close* of this Discourse: In the mean time having thus pointed out to you what that *Good* is I am now more particularly to recommend to your practice, and given you a general Prospect of our concern in it, I go on to the *second Thing* which I proposed to consider:

^p 1 Jo. iii. 6. —iv. 12, 20, 21.

^q See below, iv. Point.

II^{dly}, Of the *Time*, and *Measure*, When, and How far, it is our *Duty* to *Do this good*; *As we have Opportunity*; According to our *Ability*.

I have before said, that the Phrase of St. Paul would well enough bear each of these Interpretations; and I shall rather chuse both, than prefer either. They Both agree very well with the design of the *Text*, and will either of them afford some Useful, and Seasonable reflections to us, to direct our Practice in the *Duty* of it.

And 1st. Of the *Time*, the *Season* of *Doing Good*.

It has been the general Sense of the most Ancient *Interpreters* of this passage, to refer the *Opportunity* here spoken of to the *Time* of our *present life*^r; as being indeed the only space we have for the Exercise of such a *Charity*. And accordingly the^s *Learned Translations*, departing a little from the strictness of the *Greek Original*, have most of them render'd it, not as we have here done, *As we have therefore opportunity*; But as it still stands in our *Liturgy*, Now, while we have *Time*, let us *Do Good unto all men*^t. And thus it will agree very well with the rest of the *Context*; where the *Apostle* speaks of two different *seasons*, the *One* of *sowing*, the *Other* of *harvest*; and *Exhorts* the *Galatians* not to neglect to *sow now*, and then they shall be sure to *reap hereafter*^u.

^r See Chryf. Hieron, &c. in loc.

^t Communion Service Offertory.

^s Vulg. Lat. Syriac. Arab.

^u —9.

And

And indeed this is a Remark, than which none can be more proper for our serious Consideration. It has pleased *God* to send us into this World, to exercise our selves, and to prepare our Souls for the Happiness of the Other. Here therefore is the *Time* of *Labour*; the fatal *season* that must render us either *Happy*, or *Miserable*, to all *Eternity*. And I am sure, I need not tell you either how short, or how uncertain at the best this *Time* is. Our years run on apace; whilst we are discoursing of it we draw nigher to the Grave. Every *minute* cuts off some portion of our Life; and we cannot tell how soon *death* may overtake us, and deprive us of it all at once. And certainly then we ought to esteem it a very seasonable Admonition, which the *Apostle* here gives us, *presently, whilst we have yet the Opportunity, to Do Good*, seeing we cannot tell how little a space we may have left us for the *doing* of it.

It is the folly of a great part of the World, that in this, as well as in too many other Instances of their *Duty*, they love still to Procrastinate, and put off the *doing* of it as long as ever they can. They will *Repent* when they are *Dying*, and be *Charitable* when they are *Dead*: But will rather run the hazard of their Souls to all *Eternity*, than part either with their *Sins*, or their *Money*, before they needs must. And truly for those of the *Other Communion*, who believe that a little *Sorrow*, and *Confession* at the last, is enough to discharge them of all the *Guilt* of their *Sins*;

Sins; and that by a *Good Legacy* left to the *Church*, for *Prayers* and *Masses* to be said for them, they shall soon get quit of the *Punishment* of them too; What wonder if they reserve both their *Riches*, and their *Repentance*, for so *Seasonable a Time*, and so *Good an Occasion*? But for men who see through these delusions, and smile at such Bargains, and wonder how any *Christians* can suffer themselves to be so grossly cheated in a matter of so much concernment, as their *Money* commonly is to most, and as our *Souls* certainly ought to be to all of us; nevertheless still to delay their *doing Good*, and neglect the *Opportunity*, and leave the issue of all to a *death bed Repentance*, and a *death bed Charity*: What can we conclude but that such persons as these, must have too great an affection both for their *Riches*, and for their *Lusts*; and that could these Men have lived for Ever, they would never have thought of being either *Charitable*, or *Religious*?

Indeed for those who have been *Liberal*, and *Bountiful* before, to *finish* their *Race* with *Glo-ry*; and adorn their *Death*, with the same *Charity* that had given a *Lustre*, and *Ornament*, to them whilst they *Lived*; This is so far from being worthy of any Censure, that it ought rather to make their *Memory* precious to all future Generations. But otherwise to tarry to the last hour, and never think of *doing Good* to Others with the Portion which God has Given us, till we are no longer in a condition of enjoying it
our

our selves; this must certainly be very *Sinful*, and *Scandalous*: And tho' I will not say that such a *Legacy*, rather than *Charity*, at the last, shall utterly lose its Reward; Yet as it wants much of that Praise which the *Early giver* meets with among *Men*, so I think it may be justly doubted whether it shall find a Favourable Acceptance in the sight of *God*.

But (2^{dly}.) This *Phrase*, *As we have Opportunity*, will admit of another consideration, and that more Agreeable to our literal translation of it, viz. *When ever a fitting Occasion presents its self, and we are in a Condition of doing of it*. Not that we should suppose it to be our *Duty*, to give to every one indifferently that shall ask of us, and in the usual *dialect* of the *streets*, abuse the Sacred *Name* of *Christ*, to cover over their own *Idleness*, and *Undeserving*. There is a *Prudence* to be used in the *Distribution* of our *Charity*, as well as a *Liberality* to be shewn in the *proportion* of it. And St. ^x Paul himself has told us there are some, who *If they will not work, neither let them eat*. But that whenever a true, and worthy Object of *Charity*, presents its self to us, we should then embrace the *Occasion*; and look upon it that this is the *Opportunity*, in which if we are able, we ought to *do Good*.

^x 2 Thes. iii. 10. Ἡ ἐλεημοσύνη ἐκείνοις δέδοται μόνοις, τοῖς δὲ ἔχουσιν ἐν τῇ χειρὶ ἐξουσίαν παρκεῖσθαι ἑαυτοῖς. Chrys. in loc. P. 394. E.

Nay but yet farther, (3^{dly}.) Tho' it be most certain in the General, that whenever a fitting *Object* of *Charity* calls upon us for our relief, we ought, if we are in a Condition, to lay hold on the *Opportunity* to *do Good*; yet some *Special Seasons*, and *Occasions* there are, which will in a particular manner deserve to be look'd upon as the *proper Times* for this *Duty*.

Such are 1st. The *Times of Want*, and *Scarceness*: Whether it happens by the Hand of God, or through the Sins and Violence of men; Whether by some *dearth*, or *famine* in the Land, or by the miseries of *War* and *Tumults*; by the Obstruction of *Commerce* abroad; and, the natural consequence of that, the *Decay of Trade* at home. In these and the like Cases, the more the *Necessities* of the *poor* encrease, the greater should be our care and concern to relieve them: And we must not think, that an *ordinary Charity*, will excuse us, when such *Accidents*, and *Calamities* as these, call for an *extraordinary bounty* from us.

But especially, 2^{dly}. Such is the *Time of Tryals*, and *Persecutions for righteousness sake*: When it pleases God, whose Judgments are unsearchable, to expose (as many times he does) his own *Church*, and *Servants*, to *suffer* for their *Faith*, and a *good Conscience*; being *persecuted in one City, or Country, to fly into another*: And thereby at the same time, that he does them the *honour* of making them *Confessors* for their *Religion*, offers us the *Benefit* of being in
some

some measure *Partakers* with them in their *Afflictions*; by our careful provision for, and our generous reception of them.

It was this consideration especially, that open'd so far the hearts of the *first Converts* to *Christianity* towards one another, that they accounted nothing they had their own; but were even glad of the opportunity to do somewhat extraordinary in testimony of their *Love* to those, who shew'd so much *Love*; and *Constancy*, to their *Blessed Master*. And certainly we ought to consider, if the *storm* should have broken first upon us, what we should have in that *case* expected from them, and let that inform us what we ought to do for them.

And these are such *Opportunities*, as the *Necessities* of Others make for us: There are yet many *special Occasions* for *Doing Good* which our *Own circumstances* will offer to us.

So, 3^{dly}. In the *Times* of our *Happiness*, and *Prosperity*: When *God* does in any extraordinary manner give a *Blessing* to us, whether in our *Persons*, or in our *Affairs*; whether in our own *Private concerns* only, or in the more *General* and *Publick welfare* of our *Friends*, or *Country*. These are such *Times* in which not only our own *Reason*, and the *Common Practice* of *Mankind*, but even *God* himself has directed us to make our *Charity* to *Others*, one way of expressing our *Grateful Acknowledgments* to *Him*: That whilst we rejoyce in the effects of his *Mercy* to us, our *Brethren* may find Cause to joyn thanks with us, for the

Liberal expressions of our Love and Kindness to them. And therefore when God commanded the *Israelites* by three *Solemn Feasts* every year to keep up the Memory of the *Blessings* he had done for them in bringing them up out of *Egypt*, and planting them in that *Good land* which they possessed; He took particular care that the *Poor* should not be forgotten by them, *Deut. xvi. 11, 14. Thou shalt*, says he, *rejoyce before the LORD: Thou, and thy Son, and thy Daughter, and thy Man-servant, and thy Maid-servant, and the Levite, and the Stranger, and the Fatherless, and the Widow, that are within thy gates. For which end a Publick Collection was wont to be made at those Feasts; N. 16, 17. Three times in a year shall all thy Males appear before the LORD, in the place which he shall chuse, in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of Tabernacles; They shall not appear before the LORD Empty. Every man shall give, according to the Blessing of the LORD thy God, which he hath given thee.*

And not only if we have already received any *Signal Blessings*, or *Deliverances* from God; But 4^{thly}. When we would implore his Favour for *Future Mercies*; Whether to *deliver* us from any *Evils*, or *Calamities*, which either our *Sins* have deserved, or we may otherwise have just Cause to fear are ready to fall upon us; Or else to send down some *new Blessings* upon us; Or to *continue*, or to *perfect*, those we have already

dy received: In all these, and the like Cases, there is nothing can more effectually appease God's Anger, and enliven our Prayers, and make our Piety and our Repentance acceptable in his sight, and so obtain those Mercies which we desire from him; than to accompany all our other Service, with some extraordinary Acts of Charity, and thereby give a new Force, and Vigour to it.

When Daniel had interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and therein discover'd to him the strange Judgment which God was about to bring upon him: How he should be driven from men, and have his dwelling with the Beasts of the field, and be made to eat grass as the Oxen, and be wet with the dew of Heaven; The best Advice he could give him to stay the hand of God, and prevent the Evil that was denounced against him, was to do some extraordinary Act of Mercy and Charity to others, if perhaps he might thereby escape that Great Evil which was denounced against himself: *ŷ. 27. Wherefore, says he, O King, let my counsel be acceptable unto Thee; and break off thy sins by Righteousness, and thine Iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; If it may be a lengthening to thy Tranquillity.* And it was the Opinion of St. Jerome², That Nebuchadnezzar did accordingly take the Holy Prophet's Advice; and that 'tis to this we are to ascribe the delay which we read was made of this Judgment, for^a one whole year;

^y Dan. iv. 27.
Erasm.

² Hieronym. in Dan. c. iv. L. H. Edit.
^a Dan. vi. 29.

till forgetting his danger, and returning again to his former course of Pride and Vanity, he forfeited the continuance of that *Tranquillity*, which God had been pleased to *lengthen* to him upon the account of his *Repentance*, and *Charity*.

But, 5^{thly}, And to conclude this Point: We ought to esteem not only such *extraordinary seasons* as these to be in a more peculiar manner the *proper Times of doing Good*; but in general, Whenever either our *own Piety*, or *publick Authority*, shall engage us to any *especial*, and *singular Exercises of Religion*; In all these *Cases*, and upon all such *Occasions*, our *Prayers*, our *Thanksgivings*, our *Humiliations*, whatever our *Devotion* be, should ever-more be accompanied with some Expressions of our *Bounty* too; and our *Charity* to our *Neighbour*, be the constant companion of our *Piety* towards God.

It was this that made the devout *Prayers* of *Cornelius*^b, though a *Gentile*, so acceptable unto him, that he sent down an *Angel from Heaven* on purpose to assure him of it: *Thy Prayers*, says he, *and thine Alms, are come up for a memorial before God*^c. And 'tis to the neglect of this, that we may, among other things, I fear, impute it; that we now too often seem to lift up our Hearts in vain thither. I am sure the *Wiseman* has told us, That *whoso stoppeth his Ears at the cry of the Poor, he also shall cry himself, and shall not be heard*^d. And when the

^b Chryl. in Act. Hom. X. p. 210. A.
^d Prov. xxi. 13.

^c Acts x. 4.

Israelites heretofore complained, with some Amazement, of the ineffectualness of all their Fasting, and Prayers, to implore God's favour; and wonder'd what the meaning of it should be, that all their Cries, and Humiliations, stood them in no stead, Isaiah lviii. 3. Wherefore have we fasted, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our Souls, and thou takest no knowledge? Nay, and this at the same time that God seems to bear witness to their Piety in other respects, v. 2. Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a Nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the Ordinance of their God; They ask of me the Ordinances of justice, they take delight in approaching to God: The Prophet plainly tells them where the fault lay; They were at Variance among themselves, and uncharitable to the Poor, and this spoiled all their other Piety; Behold, says he, ye fast for strife and debate^c: Is it such a Fast that I have chosen? A day for a man to afflict his soul? Wilt thou call this a Fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD? Is not this the Fast that I have chosen, to loose the bands of Wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the Oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy Bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out, to thy House? When thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thy self from

^c Isaiah lviii. 4, 5, 6, 7.

thine own fleshⁱ? Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am^k. &c.

It were an easy matter to make a very particular *Application* of every one of these *circumstances* to our selves at this *time*; and shew that perhaps never any People lay under greater Obligations to a liberal exercise of *Charity*, than we of this *Country* do at this day. But I have already enlarged my self too much upon these *Reflections*; and must not forget that there is yet another meaning which some have given to the *phrase* of my *Text* which I have now been considering; and which brings me to the other thing I proposed to treat of, in pursuance of it, namely,

II^{dly}, Of the *Measure* we are to observe in our *Doing Good*.

Now that in general is *ὡς καὶ ἔχομεν*, *As far as we are able*, and our Capacities will permit us to do it. For so we find the word *καὶ* sometimes used, by the best *Greek Authors*, and even in these very *Epistles*; as for example, *Phil. iv. 10.* where *St. Paul* excusing the *Philippians* that they did not sooner send their relief to him, tells them they wanted no Good-will, *ἀλλ' ἡκαρῆσθε*, *but ye lacked Ability*: ¹so the *Syriac* renders it; and so ^m*St. Chrysostome*, not to mention any others, expressly tells us we are there to understand it.

ⁱ Isaiah lviii. 8.

^k —9, &c.

¹ Non eratis compotes.

^m Chryf. in Phil. Hom. xv. p. 135. E.

But

But now what that proportion in particular is, which every one ought to distribute in Works of *Mercy*, and *Charity*, I shall not undertake precisely to define. Thus much our *Apostle* tells us, that *what a man sows, the same he shall also reap*: And that we are to understand this not with Relation to the *Kind*, but to the *Measure*, and *Proportion* of our *Charity*, himself shews us, 2 Cor. ix. 6. *He which soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully; every Man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a chearful giver.* From both which it is obvious to conclude, that though St. Paul would not prescribe any certain Bounds to Men's *Charity*, which ought to be a *free-will Offering*, large and voluntary, not narrow and constrained; yet that, in *general*, he has plainly enough delivered his Opinion, that the *more* we *give*, the *better* God will *accept* of it; and the greater, and more certain, shall our returns from Heaven be.

And to a truly *Charitable* mind, there will need no other direction than this. But because such is the narrowness of most Men's Souls, that they are apt to think every little pittance that they bestow on *Acts of Mercy* to the *Poor*, to be abundantly sufficient to intitle them not only to an Acceptance, but to a Reward also: Though I shall not presume to set any bounds where the *Gospel* has not, by determining what Men ought to lay aside for this *Duty*; yet thus far I will

adventure to correct their Mistakes, as to shew what that *proportion* is below which I suppose Men ought not, without some extraordinary Occasions, to fall; or if they do, They may have just cause to fear that they shall be look'd upon by God, as *Unmerciful*, and *Uncharitable*.

Now in order hereunto, I shall in the *first place* take it for granted, that every Man ought to be the more *liberal* in his *Charity* to others, the more *free* and *bountiful* the *Providence* of *God* has been in its *distributions* to him. That is to say, that our *Charity*, must bear a proportion to our *Abilities*, and that to *whomsoever much is given, of him, in this sense also, much shall be required*.

This is what *St. Paul* seems to have laid down as the standing rule for the *Corinthians* to proceed by, 1 *Epist.* xvi. 2. That every one of them should lay aside *according as God had prosper'd, or blessed him*: Which was the very *measure* that we before saw *Moses* gave to the *Jews* heretofore; *Deut.* xvi. 17. *Every man shall give according to the Blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee*. And the same *Apostle*, in his 1st *Epistle* to *Timothy* vi. 18. bids *Timothy* charge them that were rich in this world, not only that they should be ready to give, and glad to distribute, but that they should be rich in good works; i. e. should exceed others as much in their *Charity*, as they did in their *Estates*.

From

From all which it is very plain, that if those to whom God has given a larger *Ability* than others; whose *riches* are greater, or whose *occasions* less; who have neither so many to *maintain now*, nor to *provide for hereafter*; do not in some proportion go beyond them in works of *mercy*, and *beneficence*; They may justly be looked upon to come short of that *Charity* which God expects from them, though otherwise they should chance to give in a lower, and more scanty degree.

But *Secondly*, and to come more closely to the *point* proposed. It cannot reasonably be doubted, But that as our *Saviour* himself tells us, that *He came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it*ⁿ: So *except our righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, the strictest and most diligent observers of the Law, We shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*^o. It remains therefore, that though the *Gospel of Christ*, has not particularly defined what *proportion* every man should give in works of *Charity*, yet that no *Christians* ought to give less now, than what the *Jews* heretofore were ordinarily obliged to do.

Now the *proportion* of the *Law* was this. ^p That every third *year* they should set aside the *tenth part* of their yearly income for the *use* of the *poor*: ^q That they should permit them every

ⁿ Mat. v. 17. ^o ——— 20.
^q Levit. xix. 9, 10. xxiii. 22.

^p Deut. xiv. 28. xxvi. 12.

Harvest to lease in their fields; ' That they should lend to them without Usury; ' That they should not go over their Fields, their Vineyards, or their Olive-yards, a second time to gather them clean; or if they left any sheaf, or clusters, or bunches, behind, that they should not go back to fetch them, but should leave all that escaped their first Gathering, together with a certain ' Part of each field, which they called the Corner of the Field, untouch'd, for the Stranger, the Fatherless, and for the Widow; besides some other Instances of the like kind, prescribed to them^u.

This was the Jew's righteousness, that is, his duty, his obligation: And if he transgress'd in any thing of all this, he broke the Law, and sinned against God. But they had Acts of Charity yet beyond this, and which they properly called by the Names of Mercy, and Bounty. Such were all their Voluntary Offerings at their Feasts before mention'd; All their Occasional works of pity, upon extraordinary Emergencies; If for example God had given them a greater increase than ordinary in their Fields, or their Vineyards; or if they had met with any unexpected Good success in their Affairs: If their Children and their Flocks were multiplied unto them; or else, on the other hand, some greater sin was to be expiated, or some Calamity to be prevented,

^r Exod xxii 25. Levit. xxv. 35, 36. Deut. xxiii. 19.

^s Deut. xxiv. 19.

^t Levit. xix. 19. Deut. xxiv. 19.

^u See Deut. xxiv. 14. &c.

which

which seem'd ready to come upon them, unless they took care, by some extraordinary *Acts of Charity and Repentance*, to prevent the evil, and reconcile themselves to God.

Such was the measure of the *Jews Charity* under the *Law*, and certainly the *Christians* ought not to be less. And therefore tho' I shall not pretend to determine what every man ought to do in this particular, and indeed amidst the great variety of *Fortunes*, and *Circumstances* in the World, it is hardly possible to give any certain rules for this matter; yet thus much I am persuaded we may conclude, That * no *Christian* can ordinarily excuse himself, who does not lay aside somewhat more than the *thirtieth part* of his yearly income for the *Stranger*, for the *Fatherless*, and for the *Widow*, besides all *Occasional Acts of Charity* on extraordinary Emergencies; which was the least that God required of the *Jews* heretofore, and is, I believe, the least that any *Christian* can reasonably presume shall be expected of him now.

And as we may justly suppose this to be the very *lowest degree* that is fit to be mention'd among *Christians* for the *Ordinary* discharge of this duty; So, *Thirdly*, On *extraordinary Occasions*, such as those we before laid down, 'tis certain, that this will by no means suffice. Here we must set no *bounds* to our *doing Good*, but what our want of *Ability*, or *Opportunity*, prescribes to us. Cha-

* See Dr. Hammond's Pract. Cat. l. 3. §. 1.

ity indeed does allow, and, even oblige us, first to *provide for our Own*: But when that is prudently, and moderately done, what further remains, tho' it be ours, yet it is ours only in trust for the supply of the *wants*, and *necessities*, of our Neighbours^y. And if the Exigences of the Poor be great, and they cannot otherwise be supplied, we must resolve rather to part with all that we can spare, than to see them languish, and perish for want of it. And woe be to that man who indulges either his *Covetousness*, or his *Vanity*, with that, for the lack of which his poor Brother perishes! What our Saviour once pronounced against the *Rich Man* in *St. Luke*, shall become his Sentence; *Son, remember that thou in thy life-time hast received thy Good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented*^z.

And this may suffice for our *second point*, of the *Time*, and *Measure*, of our *doing Good*. Let us consider

III^{dly}, To what *Persons* we are to do this; to *All Men, Especially unto them that are of the Household of Faith*.

Ist. We must *do Good* unto *All Men*.

It was the Opinion of *St. Chrysostome*^y, that *St. Paul* design'd this part of my *Text* to be a reproach to the narrow-spirited Temper of the *Jews*; who confined the greatest part of their

^y Chryf. de Lazar. conc. 2. p. 50. C. D. Edit. Par. Gr. Lat.

^z Luke x. 25.

^a Chryf. in Loc.

Charity to such as were of the *same Country*, or at least of the *same Religion*, with themselves; and to raise us up to a more generous, and extensive practice of it.

'Tis true, we find several Passages in the *Law* directing them to a concern not for their *own people* only, but also for the *strangers* that were amongst them. So *Levit. xxv. 35.* *If thy Brother be waxen poor, and fallen into decay with thee, then shalt thou relieve him; yea tho' he be a Stranger, or a Sojourner, that he may live with thee.* And in those particular Precepts, *Deut. xxiv.* there is an express provision made for them, at the 19th and following *Verses*: *When thou cuttest down thy Harvest in thy Field, and hast forgot a sheaf in thy field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it; It shall be for the Stranger, for the Fatherless, and for the Widow^b.* *When thou beatest thine Olive-Tree thou shalt not go over the Boughs again, it shall be for the Stranger; for the Fatherless, and for the Widow^c.* *When thou gatherest the Grapes of thy Vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterwards; It shall be for the Stranger, for the Fatherless, and for the Widow^d.* But as in many other Cases they were but ill *Interpreters* of the *Law*, so we find that in all these, and the like places, they understood by the ^e *Stranger*, a *Profelyte*, one that worshipped the same God with them: Or if they

^b Deut. xxiv. 19.

^c ——— 20.

^d ——— 21.

^e See Ainsworth on Lev. xix. 10. Fagius, Vatablus, on Exod. xii. 21. Grotius on Levit. xxv. 35.

chanced to go farther, as in those Instances of *Charity* before mentioned, we are told they did, so as to allow the *Gentiles* also a part in them; Yet alas! it was but a very small one, *viz.* That they would not hinder them from taking what remained of their *Gleanings* after all their *own poor* had gathered what they thought good; but permit them to carry away that which must otherwise have been left for the *Beasts* and *Birds*.

But the *Christian's Charity* must not be dispensed by any such scanty *Measures* as these. He must *love All-men*; and for a proof that he does so, he must, *as he has Opportunity, do good unto All men.* 'Tis not a difference of *Country*, much less a difference in *Religion*, that must set bounds to his *Beneficence*. But as God dispenses his *Blessings* to all the parts of the *Earth* indifferently; *Makes his Sun to rise, and his rain to fall, upon the just and unjust^f*, upon those who *profess his true Religion*, and upon those who *persecute their Brethren for professing of it*: So must the *Christian* follow his *Example*, and be *Merciful, as his Father which is in Heaven is merciful^g*.

Such must in general the *Christian's Love*, and *Beneficence* be: But then as God himself, though he is *kind to the Unthankful, and Evil*, has yet a particular regard to his *own Servants^h*; and even amongst them, does in a more especial manner promise to favour such as we are now speaking

^f Mat. v. 44, 45.

^g Luke vi. 36.

^h ——— *ibid.*
of,

of, the *Liberal*, and *Charitable Christians*, above all others, so ought we also to do: We must, *as we have Opportunity*, Do Good unto *All men*ⁱ; But yet,

2^{dly}, Especially to them who are of the Household of Faith.

By those who are of the Household of Faith, we may understand, either first, more largely, *All Christians*^{*} in general, who in the *Scripture Phrase* are often called *God's Household*, Ephes. ii. 19. Or secondly, more precisely, those of whom the *Apostle* was speaking *§. 6.* Let him that is taught in the Word, communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. And in which soever of these two senses we take the Expression, the *Rule* of our Text will hold good in both: That we ought in a more especial manner to be careful to do Good to them, beyond any others, to whom we are not so particularly engaged.

Nay, but secondly, and to carry this Reflexion yet farther: We may, in the exercise of our *Charity*, not only make a distinction betwixt *Christians*, and *others*, and among them prefer those chiefly who labour in the word among us; but should even with respect to all others, take care as far as we can to give to those first who either the best deserve, or the most stand in need of, our assistance.

ⁱ Chrys. in loc. p. 859.

^{*} Hieron. in loc. D.

For since the largest fortune is not enough to enable a man to relieve all; and 'tis certain that the wants of some may be much more urgent than those of others, and so more fit to be consider'd by us; and that there are many, and those commonly the most clamorous, and importunate, that are utterly unworthy to be regarded by us: He who will *Do Good* with that *prudence*, and *discretion*, he ought to do, must take all the care he can to distinguish between the one and the other of these; that since he cannot be a *Common Benefactor* to all, he may at least become so to them that the most deserve his *Pity*.

And. (1st.) There are many who finding *Begging*^m a more easy and agreeable, and sometimes even a more profitable Employment too, neglect to *work* themselves, and train up their Children to the same Trade of *Idleness*, and of living upon the *Charity* of others. As soon as they are *born*, before they can yet speak for themselves, their *Looks* and *Cries* serve for a new Topick to encrease the *Importunity* of their *Parents*: And no sooner are they able to use their *Limbs*, and have attain'd so much of *Christianity* as may suffice for their purpose, to engage the *Compassion* of unwary and good-natur'd Men, but from thenceforth they are set free to shift for themselves, and live as their friends have done before them.

^l See Ambros. de Offic. l. 2. c. 15.
veniunt nullam causam, nisi vagandi, habentes. Non semper Impudentiæ locus fit, &c. Ambros. ibid. c. 16.

^m Veniunt validi,

Now, tho' I will not say a man *commits* a Sin who relieves one of these, and do confess, that sometimes he who gives to all, may chance to light on a true *Object* of *Charity* among many that are much otherwise; yet certainly it is for the most part a good deed misplac'd: And though I know St. *Chrysostome* ^a seems to exhort us to *give to all*, upon this Consideration, that sometimes thereby we shall hit aright; yet I can no more believe that the bare *possibility* of this should make a man *charitable* without distinction, than that the passage of St. *Paul*, which he urges for it, should engage us to receive indifferently all that pass by, into our *Houses*, because by so doing *some have entertained Angels unawares*. But,

(2dly,) There is another sort of men, who by their *own fault* are reduced to *Poverty*, and are now no longer in a condition to help themselves, tho' tis in a great measure owing to their former *sins*, and *neglects*, that they are not.

I do not think that such ought wholly to be passed by, especially if they are at last come to a *due sense* of their *Folly*, and to a *serious Repentance* for it. But yet if we have before us *better men*, and as *necessitous* as the others; such as have wrought whilst they were able, and are now fallen into *Poverty*, because either their *Employment* fails them, or their *Strength* is gone through *former Labours*: If a decrepit Age has overtaken them, or it may be a *numerous Family*

^a Chrys. Hom. in Laz. 2. p. 51. B. C. p. 52. D. [°] Heb. xiii. 2.

keeps them still under, notwithstanding all their *Pains*, and *Industry*; certainly such persons as these ought first to be consider'd, and take place of those, who have not so fair a pretence to our Assistance.

And this brings me to a (3d.) Reflexion, which will yet more direct us in the wise discharge of this Duty. There are many every where *no less necessitous*, but much *more modest*, than the rude and clamorous *Street-Beggars* ^P; Who are fearful and scrupulous; Who *mourn in secret*, and complain to *GOD* in their Extremities, but cannot tell how to make their Wants known to their *fellow-Christians*. They labour diligently; they neglect no Care to support themselves, and those for whom they are concerned to provide: But alas! they labour in vain; Either a decay of *Trade*, or it may be unavoidable *Losses* in it; *Want of Business*; *Fire*, *Sickness*, a thousand other *Misfortunes*, keep them low and miserable: They cannot tell how to *ask* our *Charity*, and yet are ready to perish for want of it.

Such Men as these ought, I do not say to be relieved with all chearfulness when known, but to be enquired after, and found out, that they may be both known, and assisted by us. And our *Charity* should descend like the *Dew of Heaven* upon them; in the most soft and easy, the most courteous and obliging manner that is possible. We should take care to consult their *mo-*

^P Videndus est ille qui te non videt: Requirendus ille qui erubescit videri. *Ambros.* de Offic. l. 2. c. 15, 16.

deſty as well as their *wants*; and if poſſible not let them know from what hand their help comes, or to whom it is, beſides *God*, they are to return their thanks for it.

The truth is, theſe are a ſort of Men, that do as much deſerve our *Charity*, as the common ſort of *Beggars*, for the moſt part, do our Re-
fuſal. And if it be ſome kind of *Reproach* to our *Country*, that theſe latter are not more ſuppreſs'd, and ſet on work; it is certainly a great deal more both our *Sin*, and our *Scandal*, that the others ſhould not be more carefully provided for, and encouraged by us.

I ſhall add yet one remark more, (*4thly*) and which will bring me ſtill nearer to the *Command* of my *Text*; *As we have opportunity let us Do Good unto all Men; eſpecially unto them that are of the Houſhold of Faith.*

I have before ſaid, that by thoſe of the *Houſhold of Faith* we might underſtand, either all *Chriſtians* in general; or elſe, in *particular*, thoſe who *labour* in the *Word* among us; and I am ſorry I ſhould have any Occaſion to give you a *third meaning* of it, for ſuch *Chriſtians* as are of the ſame *particular Faith*, and *Church*, with our ſelves; or have any reflexions to offer there-
upon to you. But alas! both our *Diviſions* are too great to be diſſembled at *any Time*; and the Conſequences of them too deplorable, to be utterly paſſed by at ſuch a *Time*, and in ſuch a *Diſ-
courſe*, as this.

We live in an Age, wherein Men's different

Opinions in *Points of Christian Doctrine*, have so far transported them, as to make them almost utterly forget all the *Measures of Christian Love*, and *Charity*, towards one another. I need not tell you how sad the Effects of a *misguided Zeal* have been, both in our own, and other Countries? What *desolations* it has wrought? How many thousands it has ruined? What *Wars* and *Disturbances* it has raised, almost in all the parts of the Christian World? We have seen with our *Eyes*, and it has been told unto us, what *Calamities* our *Brethren* have undergone *abroad*: And to what extreme *Miseries* they are reduced in the midst of us, no Man can be ignorant; though I fear but few of us lay it so effectually to heart as we ought to do. And all this for the sake of that *Religion*, which by the blessing of God we yet enjoy in peace and security.

In such an unhappy state as this; When the *numbers* of our distressed Brethren are so *great*, their *cause* so *Good*, and their *Wants* so *pressing*; though I would not be so uncharitable as to say that we should withdraw either our *Affection*, or *Assistance*, from any *other Christians*, no not from those who have been their *Persecutors*; yet certainly I may, without abusing the *Design* of my *Text*, say thus much; that we ought in the first place, to give to those who are of the same *Household of Faith* with our selves, before such as do not stand in so near a Relation to us.

And, blessed be God, who has not only hitherto continued his Favours to us, it may be, for
this

this very end that we might be able to *minister to the necessities* of these his *Saints*, but has in good measure opened our *Hearts* too, and made us willing to do it. Only let us take the *Exhortation* of our *Apostle* in this place, as well as his *Direction*; and since their needs still continue, let us consider how we may still go on to provide for them; And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Which brings me to the last thing proposed.

IV^{thly}, To consider the great *Engagement* we have to the fulfilling of this *Duty*, in that *Glorious Reward* which God has promised to the performance of it.

Among all the *Arguments* which either the *Authority* of *Holy Scripture*, or the *common Principles* of *Reason*, afford to us, to stir us up to the *practice* of this *Duty*, there is none that strikes so forcibly upon the Minds of all sorts of Men, as the Consideration of those *great Blessings* which God has promised to the diligent performance of it; and of those *severe Judgments* which he will one day execute upon those that shall continue to neglect and disregard it. Other reflexions may serve to convince Men of the *Justice*, and *Reasonableness*, of such a *practice*; which indeed is so very clear that there are few so ill-natured, or insensible, as to deny it; but this shews the *Necessity* of it. Others may force us to confess it to be very fitting that we should

be thus *kind* and *charitable* to one another; but this speaks with *Authority*, and makes us resolve in good earnest so to be.

He that tells me how highly reasonable it is that I should *do* all the *Good* I can with the *portion* which *God* has given me, * That for this end I have received it, and to this end ought especially to employ it: * That my *riches* are not *my Own*, but committed to me in *trust* for the *Benefit* of *Others*, as well as for my *Own use*; and that I shall be *false* to that *trust*, if I *do* no *Good* to others by them: * That I ought to express my Gratitude to *God* for his extraordinary Favours to me, by being *Bountiful* to those who have not received so large a portion of him; * That this will, above any thing, render me most like unto *God*, and most *beloved* of *Men*: * That the poorest person in the World is yet my Brother, partaker of the same *Nature*, and it may be of the same *Promise* of *Grace* too with my self; and therefore that it will be highly, not only *un-Christian*, but even *unnatural*, and *inhuman*, not to have some *sense* and *feeling* of his *Miseries*: In a word, * That our *Riches* are very ⁹uncertain, and we should consider, that what is the Condition of many Thousands now, but lately in as *flourishing* an Estate as our selves, may, for ought we know, the next Year be our own; if *God*, for our *Uncharitableness*, shall think fit to let us also fall into the hands of the

⁹ Ecclef. xi. 1, 2.

same *Cruel*, and *Merciless* men; and therefore that we ought to think what we should judge reasonable for others in such a Case, to *do to us*; and then remember the *Great Rule* both of *Reason*, and the *Gospel*, and *do even so unto them*; does certainly speak a great deal of *Sense*, and may justly move my *Assent* to his *Arguments*. But 'tis the man who can *draw aside the Veil*, and set *Life* and *Death*, *Blessing* and *Cursing* before me; and then make it appear, upon such *Grounds* as I cannot *deny*, or even *doubt of*, that my *Happiness*, or *Misery*, both in *this World*, and *the Other*, depends upon my *Observance* or *Neglect* of this *Duty*; that will awaken all the *Powers* of my *Soul*, and at the same time both *convince*, and *force me to a compliance*.

And such is the *Argument* we have here before us, and from which therefore the *Apostle* concludes the *necessity* of our *doing Good*, as a matter that would admit of no debate: *Be not*, says he, *deceived*; *God is not mocked*: *For whatsoever a man soweth, that he shall also reap*. He that *soweth to his flesh*, that is, that either spends what he has on the *sensual Enjoyments* of the *Flesh*, or else hoards it together to the *Covetous* satisfying the *desires* of it, *shall of the flesh reap corruption*: But he that *soweth to the Spirit*, i. e. as the next *Verses* interpret it, *does good*, makes a *wise*, and *pious*, and *charitable* use of what he has, *shall of the Spirit reap*

life everlasting. Wherefore, let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Many are the *Promises* of the like kind which we meet with in other places of *Holy Scripture*; From all which it is obvious to conclude, that if we have any regard either to our *present Happiness*, or to our *future Glory*, there is nothing wherein we ought to be more careful, than by our *Charity* to establish our selves in both, For,

1st. As to this *Present Life*.

What is it possible for any one to desire to make him a *happy* man in *this World*, that God has not freely promised to the *merciful* and *liberal*?

Would he secure his *Riches*? Would he both confirm the *Enjoyment* of them to himself whilst he *lives*, and *deliver* them down in *peace* to his *posterity* when he comes to *dye*? This *Charity* has the promise of above any thing besides: *He that giveth to the poor, says Solomon, shall not lack*^f. And in another place, he delivers this as the very reason of it, *Prov. xxii. 9. He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed, for he giveth of his bread to the poor.* And holy *David* confirms the truth of this Remark both from the *Promise* of God, and from his own *Experience*, *Psal. xxxvii. 25. I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their*

^f Prov. xxiii. 27.

bread. He is ever merciful and lendeth, and his seed is blessed^r. For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever^v. But the seed of the wicked shall be cut off: The righteous shall inherit the land, and shall dwell therein for ever^w.

Nay, but would he do yet more? Would he even *encrease* his *Wealth*, and grow more prosperous in the Enjoyment of it? 'Tis a strange Assertion, but yet by the Blessing, and Promise of God, a very true one; that by giving it thus away, he shall encrease it. *There is*, says Solomon, *that scattereth, and yet encreaseth*^x. And would you know who that is? He will tell you in the next Verse: *The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself*^y.

Would he provide himself a security amidst all the *uncertain*, and many times *miserable Varieties* of this World? And be safe even in the midst of all its Dangers? *Charity* is the best defence, the surest preservative against all *Calamities*: *Blessed is the man* says David, *that considereth the poor and needy, the LORD will deliver him in the time of trouble*^z. *The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive, and he shall be blessed upon the earth, and not deliver him into the will of his enemies*^a.

In short, would he be *blessed* in all things that he *putteth his hand unto*, and have every thing

^r Psal. xxxvii. 26.

^v —27.

^w —28.

^x Prov. xi. 24.

^y —25.

^z Psal. xli. 1

^a —2.

prosper

prosper according to his hearts desire? It was the promise of God to the *Jews* heretofore, and I see no reason why we should not in some degree apply it to our selves now, that he would deal with them, according as they did with other men, *Deut. xv. 7. If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee: Thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother — Thou shalt surely give him; because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all that thou puttest thine hand unto*^b.

These are some of the *present Promises* which God has made to the *Charitable man*. I might to all this add the severe *Threatnings*, even of *present Evils*, to the Covetous Miser; to him who has no bowels of Mercy towards any others, and therefore deserves no compassion himself either from God, or Man. *He hath swallow'd down Riches, says Job, and he shall vomit them up again; God shall cast them out of his belly*^c: and that for this very reason, *ŷ. 19. Because he hath oppressed, and forsaken the poor*^d. But this is the least part of the *present Argument*, and therefore I will not insist any longer upon it. And indeed the *portion* of the *Cross*, which every good Christian must expect more or less to meet with in this world, may often times make these *present Promises* much less certain to us now, than they

^b Deut. xv. 10.^c Job xx. 15.^d — 19.

were to the *Jews* heretofore. But the other part of the Consideration is without Exception, *viz.*

2^{dly}, That if we be not weary in well doing, then in *due season*, when the great day of Retribution comes, we shall infallibly reap, if we faint not.

And here I shall presume, that no One will so far mistake the meaning of *St. Paul* in these words, as to imagine, that this, or any other *Vertue* alone, will be sufficient to our *Eternal Salvation*: So that if a man does but give liberally to the poor, 'tis no great matter how he lives, or what he does with the rest of his Estate. No, this is by no means the meaning of this *Promise*. *Charity* is indeed a most excellent *Vertue*, and will go as far, it may be farther, towards the securing our *Salvation*, than any One thing besides in the World. *St. Peter* has told us, that it shall cover the multitude of sins^c: that is, shall obtain the forgiveness of them. And *St. John* prescribes it as the best means to assure our hearts before God^f: that is to enable us to appear with confidence before him in Judgment. And a Greater than both has promised, that if we give Alms of such things as we have, all things shall be clean unto us^g. But yet when all is done, neither this, nor any other *Vertue* alone can save us. There must be an *Universal Holiness* in all other respects too, without which no man shall ever see the LORD^h.

^c 1 Pet. iv. 8.

^f 1 John iii. 19.

^g Luke xi. 41.

^h Heb. xii. 14.

And yet perhaps even in this *Case* also, tho' by our neglect in other matters we should be so unhappy as to come short of *Heaven*, our *Charity* may nevertheless not lose its reward; but may serve to make us *less miserable*, if not *happy*; to allay our *Damnation*, if not to secure our *Salvation*.

But not to pursue these Imaginations: That which the *Apostle* here promises is plainly this; That if we be not wanting to our selves, our *Charity* shall be sure to meet with a proportionable *recompence* from *God-Almighty*; and we shall *reap* among others, these Three great *Advantages* by itⁱ; *First*, That it shall prepare the way for the more certain and easy *forgiveness* of our *sins*: *Secondly*, That it shall procure us a more large and comfortable portion of *God's Grace*, to enable us to discharge our duty the better now: And *Thirdly*,^k *If we faint not*, but persevere in this and all the other parts of our *duty*, That it shall Crown us with a more *exceeding weight of Glory hereafter*. Whilst the sordid, covetous Miser, were it possible for him otherwise to abound, in all the highest perfection of *Christian Piety*, yet for want of this *One Vertue*, shall lose his Reward; and be *cast out*, with the^l *unprofitable Servant*, who *hid his Talent*, and made no use of it, *did no Good* with

ⁱ Prov. x. 12. Dan. iv. 27. 1 Pet. iv. 8. Acts x. 4. 2 Cor. ix. 14. Heb. vi. 10. ^k Matt. xix. 21. Luke xvi. 9. 2 Cor. ix. 6, 7. 1 Tim. vi. 19, &c. ^l Matt. xxv. 25, 30.

it, into utter darkness, where is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of Teeth.

And what then remains, but that having all these Encouragements to stir us up to a warm, and vigorous discharge of this *duty*, we now suffer our selves to be persuaded, in the words of our *Saviour Christ*, to provide our selves Bags which wax not old, a Treasure in Heaven that faileth not, where no Thief approacheth, neither Moth corrupteth^m. Or as Himself elsewhere expresses it, with more immediate reference to our last consideration; *To make to our selves friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness; that when we fail, they may receive us into Everlasting Habitations*ⁿ.

And yet I cannot conclude without adding one consideration more, which I hope may, I am sure should be of very Great weight with us.

It has been one of the chiefest Reproaches which those of the *Church of Rome* have endeavoured to fix upon our *Reformed Religion*, that it has not only put a stop to *Charity*; but has moreover cut off the very Ground, and Foundation of it; and all this only for rejecting those *superstitions* by which they principally have their Gain.

How false this *imputation* is, as to the latter part of it, we have now pretty largely seen. God be thanked, *Christianity* affords *Motives*, and *Engagements*, enough to *Charity*, without run-

^m Luke xii. 33.

ⁿ —xvi. 9.

ning to any vain and superstitious pretences for the support of it. He who believes the singular Efficacy of this *practice* both by the *promise* of God^o, and through the *prayers* of those whom He relieves, to obtain the *forgiveness* of his *sins*, and to deliver his *Soul* from *Eternal damnation*, will need no *Vision* of *Purgatory* to open his Heart to the *Poor*. He may indeed turn his *Charity* another way: Instead of bartering his *Money* with the *Priests* for *Masses*, and *Prayers*; for *Pardons* and *Indulgences*; for *Holy Trifles* to *prevent*, or *expiate Sins*, He may bequeath it to the *Poor* which is a great deal better. And if this be the *Charity* which our *Religion* has put an end to, we shall neither be afraid, nor ashamed, to confess it.

And for the *former*; It might easily be made appear, that laying aside the *Superstitions* we but now mention'd, there has much more been done since the *Reformation* in works of *wise* and *true Charity*, than ever was done in twice that time from the first *rise* of *Popery* among us to its going off. And how much soever some of late have thought fit to *Magnify* the *Piety* of *Rome*, and *Paris*; yet, upon these *Principles* we may venture to say, that in this as well as all other *Advantages*, our own *City* does exceed them.

To run through a *particular comparison* in this point, were both to abuse your *Patience*, and the *Design* of this discourse. Let the Account

of what has been done in its *publick Hospitals* only this *last Year*, serve as a short but sufficient Evidence, whereby to judge with how little reason we are tax'd with a *decay of Charity* amongst us.

A True report, &c.

III. Such was the Effect of the *last Years Piety*: And how much of all this has been *wholly Established since the Reformation*; what vast *additions* have been made to what was *begun before*; how faithfully these *great Trusts* have been, and are *still administred*; and kept up notwithstanding the mighty *losses* they have sustain'd, and the other frequent *misfortunes* under which they have fallen, is well known to most of this *Assembly*.

Could I to all this Add the sum of what in such a doubtful, and discouraging Year, as this, according to common Estimate, has been; has nevertheless been expended within this *One City*, in more *private Acts* of Mercy: What *liberality* has been shewn in *Collections* twice made for our *Exiled Brethren*, after two before gather'd for our Neighbours of the *French Churches* on the same occasion: Not to mention all other Occurrences, from which no Day, scarce any Hour is exempted; We should then have enough not only to *silence*, but to *shame*, the *Cavils* of our *Enemies*, and to engage us to *blesse God*, who has in some measure opened our Hearts to the *Cries*
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of the Poor, and not suffer'd them to call in vain upon us.

But yet since this is the *Reproach* our Enemies now endeavour to fix upon us; let us be as ready by our Practice to *confute* this, as we have been, with good success by our *Arguments*, to answer all their other *Objections* against us.

Let us shew them, that tho' our *Religion* will neither allow us to *boast* of our *Good Works* to *Men*, nor to pretend to *Merit* by them of *God*; yet it teaches us to be no less, nay in truth to be much more, studious than themselves in the performance of them.

And the more to engage us to this *Care*, let us often represent to our selves the *Great Motive* which *St. Paul* has here set before us, to stir us up to a free and ready Discharge of this *Duty*.

Let us consider, that the *Time* is *coming*, when we must give a strict account of our selves, and of all the *Abilities*, and *Opportunities*, that we have had of *Doing Good*; and *what Use* we have made of them.

That the Enquiry then will not be what our *Opinions*, or *Persuasions*, were, in such or such controverted *Points* of *Christianity*? To what *Church* we have belong'd? or, How well we have determined the many *Questions* that so fatally *distract*, and *divide* mens minds, in *matters* of *Religion*; But, How well we have *lived*? How *charitable* we have been to those who have differ'd from us? and in particular, How *kind* and *bountiful* to the *Poor*, and *Needy*?

This

This is what our *Saviour* assures us, in the Account which he has left us of the Great day of *Judgment*: And with which, as being the noblest *Argument* that ever was, or could have been invented, for the enforcing of this duty; and a short *Summary* of all that I have here been laying before you to excite you to it; I shall conclude this whole *Discourse*^P.

When the Son of Man shall come in his Glory, and all the Holy Angels with him, then shall he sit upon the Throne of his Glory^q.

And before him shall be gathered all Nations, and he shall separate them One from Another, as a Shepherd divideth his Sheep from the Goats.

And he shall set the Sheep on his right-hand, and the Goats on his left.

Then shall he say unto them on his right-hand: Come ye Blessed of my Father; inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the World. FOR I was an Hungred, and ye gave me Meat; I was Thirsty, and ye gave me Drink; I was a Stranger, and ye took me in; Naked, and ye cloathed me; I was Sick, and ye visited me; I was in Prison, and ye came unto me^r.

Then shall the Righteous answer him, saying, LORD, when saw we thee an Hungred, and fed thee? or Thirsty, and gave thee Drink? When saw we thee a Stranger, and took thee in? or Naked, and cloathed thee? Or when saw

^P Matt. xxv.

^q — ^v. 31, &c.

^r — ^v. 34, &c.

we thee Sick, or in Prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them; Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my Brethren, ye have done it unto me^s.

Then shall he also say unto them on the Left-hand; Depart from me ye Cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels. FOR I was an Hungred, and ye gave me no Meat; I was Thirsty, and ye gave me no Drink; I was a Stranger, and ye took me not in; Naked, and ye cloathed me not; Sick, and in Prison, and ye visited me not^t.

Then shall they also answer him, saying, LORD, when saw we thee an Hungred, or a thirst, or a Stranger, or Naked, or Sick, or in Prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying; Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me^v.

And these shall go away into Everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life Eternal^w.

^s Matt. xxv. 37, &c.

^t y. 41, &c.

^v y. 44, &c.

^w y. 46.



S E R M O N III.

Preached before the

KING and QUEEN

A T

W H I T E - H A L L,

MAY the 4th. 1690.



LUKE xvi. 25.

But Abraham said; Son, Remember that Thou in thy life-time receivedst thy Good things, and likewise Lazarus Evil things: But now, He is Comforted, and Thou art Tormented.



THE words are part of a *Parable*, in which our *Saviour Christ* sets forth to us the different Methods of *God's Providence* in his dispensations to *Mankind*, with relation to the *Happiness* of this life, and of the *Other*. That

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however he may here seem to scatter his *Blessings* at all adventures, upon the *Good* and *Bad* indifferently, and permit the *Wicked* to triumph in their *Impiety*; yet there is a time coming when *He* will call them to a severe account for all their *Actions*, and render to every man according to his *Works*.

“ *There was a certain rich Man, which was*
“ *cloathed in purple, and fine linnen, and fared*
“ *sumptuously every day. And there was a cer-*
“ *tain Beggar, named Lazarus, which was laid*
“ *at his Gate full of sores; and desiring to be*
“ *fed with the Crumbs which fell from the rich*
“ *man's table; moreover the dogs came and*
“ *licked His sores. And it came to pass that*
“ *the beggar died, and was carried by the An-*
“ *gels into Abraham's bosome: The rich man al-*
“ *so died, and was buried. And in Hell he lift*
“ *up his Eyes, being in torments, and seeth A-*
“ *braham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosome.*
“ *And he cried, and said, Father Abraham,*
“ *Have mercy on me; and send Lazarus, that*
“ *he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and*
“ *cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this*
“ *flame.*

“ *But Abraham said; Son, Remember, that*
“ *Thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good*
“ *things, and likewise Lazarus evil things:*

“ *but now he is comforted, and Thou art*
“ *tormented.*

It has been one of the oldest *Complaints* that we any-where meet with against the *Providence* of God in his menagement of the Affairs of this *lower World*, That He so often permits the *greatest Sinners* to be *easy*, and *prosperous*; whilst *better men* are forced many times to encounter with all the difficulties, and discouragements, not only of a poor and despicable Fortune; but that too rendred yet more uneasy, by the *Injuries*, and *Oppressions*, which the wicked are suffered to bring upon them.

If we look back into the *state* of the *World* before our *Saviour*; even then when it pleased God to make *temporal blessings* in some measure the encouragement to *Obedience*; yet we shall find nevertheless the best Men both wondring at, and complaining of, the *inequality* of this *procedure*. Truly, says *Holy David*, P^{sal.} lxxiii. 1. *God is good unto Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart: But as for me, my feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipp'd^b: For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked^c.* And *Job* himself, tho' so *patient* under his own *sufferings*, yet could not forbear to expostulate with God, about the *flourishing condition* of *Evil Men*; Job xxi. 7. *Wherefore do the wicked live, become old,*

^b P^{sal.} lxxiii. 2.

^c ——— 3.

yea, are mighty in power? And the best account that could then be given of this matter was; That tho' *Providence* did permit them to flourish for a while, yet it commonly brought some severe Judgment upon them at the last: And, as the *Heathens* themselves sometimes observed, therefore raised them up to a height of fortune extraordinary, that their *Fall* might be the greater, and more remarkable.

This was what the *Prophet David*, after all his search, acquiesced in, as the best Argument both to satisfy himself, and to vindicate *God Almighty*. Surely, says He, *thou dost set them in slippery places, and castest them into destruction^d: How are they brought into desolation as in a moment? They are utterly consumed with terrors^e: As a dream when one awaketh, so, O Lord, when thou awakest shalt thou despise their Image^f.* And in another *Psalms*, He gives this as the reason, why we should not be troubled at the prosperity which wicked Men seem sometimes to enjoy: *Fret not thy self because of Evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of Iniquity^g; For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb^h.* And *Solomon* not only insists upon the same Reason, but almost transcribes the very same words; *Prov. xxiv. 19. Fret not thy self because of Evil Men, neither be thou envious at the Wicked; For there shall be no reward to the Evil*

^d Psal. lxxiii. 18.

^g Psal. xxxvii. 1.

^e — 19.

^h — 2.

^f — 20.

Man, the Candle of the Wicked shall be put outⁱ.

And the same was the Reflection which the rest of the *Holy Men* in those times contented themselves withall upon this occasion. They saw but little of a *future state*, and of that Eternal Retribution which God will hereafter make of *Rewards* and *Punishments*, to every one according to his works: And therefore they sought out that punishment for *Sinners* in this *World*, which they could not with any certainty assign to them in the *other*.

Nor indeed was this any more than what the Tenor of the *Law* its self directed them to. For it having pleased God by the *promises* of Blessing and Happiness in this *present life*, to stir up the *Jews* to the Obedience of his Commands; and by the *threatnings* of troubles, and *disappointments*, of losses and afflictions, to be undergone by them, to affright them from sin: Well might they be surpris'd, when, contrary to all this, they saw *wicked men* in great *Prosperity*; and justly might they conclude, according to what both the *Law* of God, and the *Methods* of his *Dispensations*, and their own *Experience*, led them to do; that the *happiness* of such Persons should not be of any *long continuance*; but, as the *Psalmist* expresses it, in the *Psalm* I before mentioned, *Psal. xxxvii. 35, 36. I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself*

ⁱ Psal. xxiv. 20.

like a green bay-tree : Yet he passed away, and lo, he was not ; yea I sought him, but he could not be found^k.

Such was the *Case* of the best men heretofore under the *Law* : And I shall not need to say, how apt we all of us are, to complain of *God's Providence* upon the same account even now : And if not, with the *Sceptick*, to take occasion from thence to dispute whether he has any concern at all for the *Affairs* here below ; yet at least with *Jeremy* to reason sometimes with him of his doings, *Jer. xii. 1. Righteous art thou, O LORD, when I plead with thee, yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments : Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper ?*

But the *Instance* of the *Text* explains the difficulty ; gives a final *satisfaction* to all our doubts, and for ever *silences* our Complaints ; and *vindicates* both the *Justice*, and *Goodness*, of *God Almighty*. Whilst drawing aside the *vail* which hung before their eyes, it gives us a clear prospect of a state of things beyond the narrow bounds of this *present World*. A *State* where all these seeming Irregularities shall be set to rights : Where the *Sinner* shall be divested of all his present *happiness* ; and the *Greatness*, the *Pleasures* he now enjoys, expire into the *sad result* of that *Sarcastick Concession*, which *Solomon* once made to the wicked in his days ; *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy*

^k Psal. xxxvii. 37.

heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; Walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: But know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee to judgment¹.

Nay, but the *Text* carries us yet farther: It not only sets before us the different state of the poor despised *Lazarus*, and the rich *Voluptuary*, in the *other world*; tho' that had been sufficient to *justify* the *Providence* of God, both for all the *Good* which the *One* had received, and for all the *Evil* which the *Other* had suffer'd, here on *Earth*: But seems in great measure to represent to us their several conditions in this *Life*, as the very *Ground*, and *Reason*, of their different Portions in the other, *Son*, remember, that Thou in thy life-time hast received thy Good things, and likewise *Lazarus* Evil things; but now He is comforted, and Thou art tormented. He does not tell him of the *Abuse* he had made of his *Riches*, in employing them to the Service of his *Pride*, and *Sensuality*. He reproaches him not with his *Uncharitableness*, that could let this poor man lie and perish at his *Gate*, and not take so much notice as his very *Dogs* did of him. No; he represents to him only the *Happiness* he sometime enjoyed whilst he was in this World; and the *Grandeur*, and *Jollity*, in which he lived in it: As if a *continued state of Prosperity* in this *life*, were almost incompatible with the *Blessings*, and *Glories*, of the other.

^m Eccles. xi. 9.

And however I shall not presume to be so rash, as to make a general *Rule* of this Remark ; That those who are *Great*, and *Rich*, and *Honourable* now, are not to expect any further *Portion* hereafter ; and, *God* be thanked, we have Instances at this time before our eyes, that would be sufficient to confute the uncharitableness of such an *Affertion* : Yet thus much I may take leave to observe from it ; That such Persons as these, shall of all others the *most hardly be saved*. And therefore that we ought to be so far from repining at *God's Providence* for dispensing so large a share of these *Blessings* to them, or from envying of them upon any such account ; that we should rather pity their danger, who are beset with so many more, and so much greater Temptations, than other men ; And must take a great deal more care and pains, be much more watchful over themselves, and zealous in their duty ; or else what we falsely call their *Happiness*, may prove their *ruin* to all *Eternity*.

It was a severe Censure which our *Saviour* once pass'd upon the *Riches*, and I fear I may extend it to all other the like advantages, to the *Honours*, the *Power*, the *Pleasures* of this world ; Mat. xix. 23. *Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven*. And again, v. 24. *I say unto you, It is easier for a Camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven*. And when his *Disciples* thereupon began with some *amazement* to ask of him,
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Who then can be sav'dⁿ? We do not find him at all moderating his Reflection. He tells them, that it was indeed possible for such a one to be saved; but it was like removing a mountain, or raising a dead man to life: A work to be done only by a Miracle of God's Grace; by that mighty Power which makes nothing impossible to a Divine Agent; Jesus said unto them, With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible^o.

And this is that which I shall now endeavour both from the *Remark*, and the *Example*, of the *Text*, more particularly to represent to you. I am sensible that I am here speaking to Persons of a more than ordinary *Fortune*, and *Character*, in the *World*. And I know how much harder it will be, without great care, for such to be *saved*, than for those of an *Inferiour degree*: And therefore how necessary it is, that they should be fully convinced, and persuaded of it. And I am not in the least apprehensive, that I shall at all *discourage* their *Piety* by such an Undertaking. It is the Honour of *Great*, and *Generous* minds, to be *brave* and *daring*. The *difficulties* that would affright others, serve only to animate them the more to overcome them. And this *Promise* they have from *God Almighty*, That as their task is more difficult than other mens, so shall his *Grace* be dispenced to them in a *greater*, and more plentiful *Degree*. So that if they be

^m Mat. xix. 25.

ⁿ —26.

not wanting to themselves, he will not fail to assist their Endeavours: He will bless them with an extraordinary measure of his *Grace* now; and will crown them with a more *Exceeding weight of glory* hereafter.

For the better clearing of all which, I shall observe this *Method*:

Ist. I will shew, how much more difficult it is for those who are *Great*, and *Rich*, and *Powerful*, to be saved, than for other men? And upon what *Grounds* it is that it becomes so?

II^{dly}. I will consider what Influence such a *Reflection* ought to have upon both *sorts of men*;

1. Upon the *One*, to stir them up to a greater *Care* of their *future Happiness*.
2. Upon the *Other*, to engage them to a patient Acquiescence under the *meanest Circumstances*.

And Ist. I am to shew, How much more difficult it is for those who are *Great*, and *Rich*, and *Powerful* to be saved, than for other men? And upon what *Grounds*, it is that it becomes so?

Now this will appear from these two *Considerations*;

Ist. Of that *Obligation* which those who enjoy these *Advantages* lie under, to a higher, and

and more perfect *Discharge* of their *duty*, than other men. And

2^{dly}. Of those *Temptations* which these very things many times bring along with them to the *hindrance* of it: Whilst instead of *ministring* to their *Piety*, and so *increasing* their *Reward*, they serve rather to *expose* them the more to *danger*, and in the consequence thereof, become oftentimes the greatest *Occasion* of their *Eternal Destruction*.

For if such *Persons* as these have a larger, and more comprehensive *Duty* to fulfil, upon the account of those *Advantages* which they enjoy above other men; and if these very things which thus increase their *duty*, are at the same time apt to prove the greatest *Lets* and *Hindrances* to them in the performance of it; nay to become even *Snares*, and *Temptations*, to them to draw them aside from it: It will then follow that their condition must be more dangerous than that of *ordinary Christians*, who neither lie under such *Engagements*, nor are *exposed* to such *Temptations*.

And 1st. That those to whom *God* has given these *Advantages* above *other men*, do thereby become engaged to a higher and more perfect *discharge* of their *duty* than *other men*.

For proof whereof I shall need go no farther than that plain *Evangelical Rule* of our *Blessed Saviour*, Luke xii. 48. *That unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required; and unto whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.* He was speaking in
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the *Verse* before, of the difference which God would make in his exactions hereafter, according to the different degrees of men's *Knowledge*, and *Capacities*, now. *That* ° *servant*, says he, *which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.* And the same is the case of all the other *Advantages* which God is pleased to bestow upon Mankind: Whether they be the *internal* assistances of *Grace*, and *Knowledge*; or the external Blessings of *Honour*, *Riches*, *Authority*, and the like: Whatever the *instance* be, whereby He is pleased to enable one man to do more good, and make a more plentiful return of *Duty*, and *Service*, to him than another; his Account shall be required in proportion thereunto; and to *whom God has committed much, of him he will ask the more.*

To prove therefore that there is a greater, and more extensive *Duty*, incumbent upon such *Persons* as these I am now speaking of, than upon the *ordinary sort of Christians*, I shall need only to shew, that God has given them a *greater Capacity of doing Good* than he hath given others; and that, by consequence, it must be their own fault, if they do not make a return, in some measure proportionable thereunto.

I. Now the *First Advantage* that I shall men-

° Luke xii. 48.

tion is that of *Time*: Which however at present but little regarded by most of us, is yet without question not only a very valuable thing in itself, but such a *Blessing* as, whatever we do at the present, yet the hour is coming when we shall All begin to put a very high Estimate upon it. And when I consider the great business a *Christian* has to do in this World; What *Duties* to fulfil? What *Lusts*, and *Passions*, to overcome? How many *Difficulties*, and *Temptations*, to encounter with? And then think, how short our *Life* at the best is? What *Accidents* may arrive to throw us the next moment into the *Grave*? How much of our *time* the *Necessities* of our *Nature* deprive us of? How much more is stolen from us by the unavoidable *Obligations* which the *Business* and *Conversation*, and too often the *Ceremonies* and *Impertinence* of the World lay upon us? To say nothing of our *Vanities* and *Sins*, which yet I fear in all of us have their share, and in many of us a very large one too of our *Time*, to their Service: I must confess there is nothing wherein I could sooner chuse to envy the *Happiness* of those above me, than in this one *Advantage*; tho' such as the most of them seem to put the least value of all upon, and suffer every little occasion to deprive them of.

And for the Opportunity which such Persons hereby have the better to improve their *Piety*, it is so very evident, that I shall not need to say any thing in proof of it. Whilst being freed from thole *Necessities* under which others labour; and
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the supplying whereof not only fills up the greatest part of their time, but too much possesses their very *Hearts* and *Affections*: They have much more leisure, as well as higher Engagements, to fulfil their Duty, and to improve themselves in Virtue, and Piety; and to spend that *time* in the more excellent pursuits of the *Glories* of their *future state*, which they have no need to do in a solicitous care for the support of their *present condition*.

But I must go yet farther: For such Persons as these have not only more *Time*, and by that means better *Opportunities*, to serve *God*, and work out their *Salvation*, than the ordinary sort of *Christians*; but they have moreover better *Capacities*, and larger *Abilities* to do Good, than other *Men*. For,

2^{dly}. If we consider them in themselves, and their personal Qualifications only, we shall generally find *another kind of Spirit* in them, than what we usually meet with in the *common*, and *vulgar*, part of Mankind. Whether it be that from the beginning they are accustomed to a better Conversation, and bred up with other *Maxims*, and *Notions* of things, than those of an inferior Order: Or that it pleases God, to their greater Opportunities of serving him in other respects, to add a better Capacity too to these than to other Men: But this is plain, that something there is in the very *Temper*, and *Disposition*, of those of a higher Rank, exceedingly superior to what we ordinarily find in those Below them. Their *Thoughts*

are more *elevated*, their *Desires* more *noble*, their *Understanding* is more clear and discerning; and by standing upon a higher Ground, they see farther than others commonly do, whose very *Hearts*, and *Minds*, are many times as mean, and narrow, as their *Fortunes*, and their *Employments*.

To all which if we add, what such Persons for the most part enjoy, the great happiness of a better, and more ingenuous *Education*, it cannot be doubted but as this must needs put a very great difference in all other respects between those of a *Higher Quality*, and the common Crowd of *Mankind*; so does it at the same time exceedingly better fit them for the *Service* of God, and for more high and extraordinary Attainments in the ways of *Piety* and *Religion*.

It is indeed very sad to reflect how insensible too many of the *meaner sort* of Men seem to be of their *Duty*. One would almost wonder how Persons bred up in a *Church* where the *Gospel of Christ* is so fully and plainly preach'd to them; Where the *Holy Scriptures* are read to them in their own *Tongue*, and put into their *Hands* for their own private Use, and Meditation; should nevertheless remain almost as ignorant of the first Principles of Christianity, as if they had never enjoyed any of these opportunities of being instructed in it.

But then there is this to be said for it; That neither their *Parts*, nor their *Education*, enable them; nor will the necessary affairs of Life permit them, to attain to so distinct, and thorough a
H knowledge

knowledge of the *Mysteries* of the *Gospel*, as those of a higher Rank; Of the *Love of God*, and the *Merits* and *Satisfaction* of our *Redeemer*; Of the *Terrors* of the *final Judgment*, and that *Eternity* of Rewards, or Punishments, that will be the Consequence of it; and what mighty obligations all these Considerations lay upon us to *live well*, and to *depart from all iniquity*.

And yet even among these, we find many who are *zealous* for *God's service* beyond what one could almost have expected from them: That improve every Opportunity, suffer no Occasion to slip them that they can possibly steal from their present employments, to *increase* their *knowledge*, and to *exercise* their *piety*. How much rather ought those to whom *God* has given so many more, and better, Advantages to do this; Whose *Minds* are more raised, Whose *Understandings* more enlarged, Who know the *Mysteries* of *Christ's Kingdom*, What *promises* *God* has made to assist our *piety*, and what *blessings* he has prepared for ever to reward it, to be in an extraordinary manner careful of themselves: And not suffer these *poor Souls* to rise up in the judgment against them, and condemn them; for that being so much better fitted to discharge their duty, and having so much more *leisure* to do it, than they; they have nevertheless so grossly neglected it, and taken no care to *exceed*, or it may be even to *equal* them, in *well-doing*.

But 3^{dly}, Such persons as these, have not only more *Time*, and a better *Capacity* for the performance of their

their Duty, than those of a lower degree; but, what is yet more, they have in many respects, a greater *Ability* too of *Doing Good*, and of promoting the *Interests* of *Piety*, and *Religion*. And that especially upon these three Accounts,

(1st.) Of their *Riches*.

(2^{dly}.) Of their *Authority*.

And in the consequence of both these,

(3^{dly}.) Of their very *Example*.

(1st.) If we consider them as *Persons* of larger *Fortunes*, and more *plentiful Estates*, than other *Men*; How many *Advantages* will this one thing minister unto them for the better advancing the *Service* of *God*, and the *Interests* of *Christianity*? What influence will this give them not only over their own Houses, but over multitudes abroad, who some way or other depend upon them, and need only their encouragement to become religious?

To pass by all other *Benefits*, and offer but one Instance instead of many. It cannot be doubted but that the more it has pleased *God* to dispense to any one of these things, the more he not only is able, but is obliged, to lay out in the Exercise of that most excellent *Virtue* of *Charity* and *Beneficence*: A duty than which I know not whether there be any more *acceptable* to *God*, or more *advantagious* to our *Eternal Salvation*. And though there is scarce any state so mean as to be utterly exempt from all discharge of it; yet they are the *Rich* and *Wealthy*, Those to whom *Providence* has been *free and liberal*,

no less to set them an *Example* what they ought to do to others, than to *enable* them to do it; whom we are to look upon as the chief *Stewards of Heaven*; the principal dispensers of its blessings to the *poor*, and *needy*. And therefore tho' St. Paul recommends *Charity* to all, and passes by none in his Exhortations to it; yet we may observe that they are such as these whom he bids *Timothy* in a particular manner call upon not to be wanting in a liberal Exercise of it: ^p *Charge them that are rich in this world—that they be rich in good works; ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*

For the next instance, (2^{dly},) that of *Power*, and *Authority*: I shall not need to say what a mighty *Advantage* this also gives to such *persons* of doing more than ordinary Good, by obliging Others to do it. And indeed I cannot tell whether there be any more truly *beneficial*; but sure I am, a more *noble* or *excellent* Use, there cannot be made of any *Power*, or *Authority*, we may chance to have committed to us, than for the promoting the *Glory of God*, the *Salvation of Men's Souls*, and a *publick sense of Piety*, and *Religion*, in the World. And how those to whom God has given so glorious an *Advantage* as this of serving him beyond Others, will be able to excuse themselves at the *last day*, if they do not

especially employ it to this *best* of *Ends*, I must confess I do not see: Nor can I persuade my self that a *private Piety* is all *God* will exact of such persons, in whose power it was in some measure to have *reformed the Age*; and if not to have made Men *Good*, yet at least to have kept them from being openly, and scandalously, *wicked*.

Nay, but (3^{dly}), and to close this Point: Should those whom we are now speaking of have no such *Advantages* as these, in point either of *Riches*, or *Authority*; which nevertheless I believe but few of them want; yet still the very influence of a Great Man's *Example* is beneficial. It not only strikes Men's *Eyes*, but for the most part, I know not how, *charms* their *Hearts*, and *Affections*, into a *Love* first, and then into an *Imitation* of it.

There is nothing more ordinary in the common practice of the World, than for those of an *inferior Rank* to take their measures from such as are above *Them*. 'Tis this makes *Sin* its self become reputable, when countenanc'd by the *Examples* of the *Great*, and *Honourable*: And the *Commands* of *God*, and all the *Terrors* of *Eternity* are too weak to prevail against the *Power* of *Vice*, when got into Credit and Custom among such persons. How much more might we hope to see *Piety* and *Religion* revive among us, would the *Princes*, and *Nobles* of our *Israel*, seriously resolve to set the *Example*: And make *Vertue* as necessary to a good *Esteem*, and *Interest*, and *Reputation* with Men, as it is to ob-

tain the *Love* of *God*, and the *Blessings* of *Eternity*?

And thus have I consider'd some of those *Advantages* which oblige Persons of Great *Authority*, and *Fortune*, and *Quality*, in the World, to a higher and more perfect discharge of their *Duty* than other men. Let us see,

2^{dly}, What the *Effect* of all this generally is; and whether these very *things* at the same time that they thus lay a greater *Obligation* upon such Persons to be more eminently good than those of a lower Rank, are not apt, thro' the evil Inclinations of our corrupt Nature, to be perverted to a quite contrary purpose; both to *tempt* them first, and then to *enable* them, to be more highly *Criminal* than other men?

In speaking to which *Point* I presume no One will so far misunderstand me, as to think I have any design to make an *Apology* for the *Sins* of *Great Men*, by shewing what extraordinary Dangers, and Temptations, their very condition oftentimes exposes them to. For though where there is a sincere desire, and an hearty Endeavour, to live Well; this Consideration perhaps may, and I doubt not shall, prevail with *God* to make greater Allowances for the *slips* and *infirmities* of such persons, than of those who have not the like Difficulties to encounter with; yet cannot this be any Excuse for those who by these means suffer themselves to be utterly drawn away from their *Duty*, and engaged in a *Course* and *Habit* of *Sin*;
But

But on the contrary, it will aggravate *their Guilt the more*; for that knowing their *Danger*, They *nevertheless* neglected to look to themselves, and to take that due care they ought to have done to preserve their *Innocence*.

And 1st, For the *first Advantage* beforementioned, that of *Time*: I have already observed, that this is a *Benefit* which such *persons* seem to put the least *Value* of all upon, though one of the most *considerable*; and I must now add, that being thus neglected by them, it proves for the most part a Snare, and a Temptation, to them; and becomes one of the chiefest Causes of their *Sin* and *Ruin*.

He who lives by his *Industry*, and in the *sweat of his brow eats his bread*^a; wants indeed the Opportunity of paying that constant Attendance, which others may do, upon the Solemn Exercises of *Piety* and *Devotion*. His Thoughts are taken up with the Affairs of this Present Life, how to carry on his business, and supply his needs. And this hinders his *Soul* from having its *Conversation* so much in *Heaven*; whilst his concern after the things of this *World*, renders him very often unable, I had almost said unfit, to contemplate the Joys, and Glories, of the other.

But though he cannot therefore be so *active* in the *more immediate Service* of *God Almighty*, yet he spends his *time* in serving the *Order* of his *Creation*. He is *Honest*, and *Innocent*;

^a Gen, iii. 19.

And his very *Business*, which hinders him from rising so high in Religious Attainments, as those who have Greater Leisure may, and ought to do, yet keeps him from their Temptations, and prevents Him from falling into any *Great, and Dangerous, Irregularities*.

Whilst those who have more *Time* for the discharge of their *Duty*, and whose Thoughts, and Considerations, have no need to be thus employ'd upon an anxious sollicitude after the *things* of *this World*, are oftentimes far enough from raising them up to those of a better. They are *Idle*, and *Lazy*; They look upon it to be one part of their *Birthright*, the privilege of their *higher station*, to have nothing to do: And then the *Tempter* never fails to stand ready for them; and Experience shews how easy the Transition is, from the *doing* of *Nothing*, or that which is as good as Nothing, to the *doing Ill*.

2. For the *Second Benefit*, that of *Better Parts*, and a more *ingenuous Education*; It is indeed an *Advantage* not so apt to prove a Snare to Men as the other; but yet such as may be abused to very wicked purposes also. And the *Church* has in all Ages had but too many *Instances* of this kind, to shew how much more capable Men of *great Parts*, and a *Comprehensive Knowledge*, are, of being eminently Wicked, and doing Mischief to Religion than any Others.

What is it but this that has given Birth to most of those prophane libels, wherein we find not
only

only the *Mysteries* of *Christianity*, but even the *Practice* of all *Religion*, exposed to scorn and ridicule? I shall not need to send you back to *Julian*, and *Porphry*, and the like profess'd Enemies of the *Christian Faith* for Witnesses of this. Our own *Age*, and even our own *Country*, has bred up those who at the same time that they have call'd themselves by the sacred Name of *Christ*, have nevertheless bid defiance to his *Gospel*; and esteem'd it a matter of Wit, and Sense, to expose the most *sacred Things*, and laugh the *practice* of *Religion* out of Countenance. Who have employ'd their *Parts* only to find out some new Colours for *Scepticism*, and *Infidelity*: To free themselves from the *Restraints* of *Piety* now, and to harden themselves against the *Fears* of *Damnation* hereafter.

But shall not God visit for these things? Shall not his Soul be avenged on such Sinners as These? Yes, the time is coming when he shall turn all their Laughter into Mourning, and bring those *Evils* upon them they now pretend to scoff at the very Name of: And give them a sad Conviction how much they were mistaken, when they thought *Profaneness* to be *Sense*; and to make a mock of *Damnation* the approved Evidence of a Man of *Depth*, and *Knowledge*: And shew that when all is done, what *Job* so long since observed is indeed the very Truth; Behold,

the Fear of the LORD that is Wisdom, and to depart from Evil that is Understanding.

And when thus Mens *Parts*, and *Education*, those best *Advantages* to *Vertue*, and *Piety*, may be turned into a *Snare*, and a *Temptation*; much more,

3^{dly}. Will those other *Benefits* yet remaining, of *Riches*, and *Power*, and *Greatness*, be found to fall under the same Censure; which are both infinitely more *Easy* to be *abused*, and not at all less able to minister to their greater *Guilt*, and in the consequence of that, to their more certain *destruction*.

The Truth is, whether we consult our *Reason* or our *Experience*; What Use such persons commonly do make of these things; or What, without a great deal of Care, they will be likely to make of them; we shall find but too much cause to conclude what I am now asserting to be most true; that if on the one hand, *Riches*, and *Greatness*, and *Power*, are *Advantages* that both enable, and engage, those who have them, to do much more good in their Generation than other Men; yet they may, and without very great Care, will be apt to expose them to many *Temptations* too: And instead of rendring them more excellently Good, make them only more exceedingly Wicked, than otherwise they either would, or could, have been. And I shall not need to spend the time in a proof of that which

our Saviour thought to be so very plain, as to make it almost a *General Rule*, a kind of *Aphorism* in *Christianity*; That a rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of God^t; and of which, if you please, we will take the Instance of our *Text* for the Application; Son, remember, That thou in thy Life time receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus Evil things; But now, He is Comforted and Thou art Tormented.

And now then, to conclude this first Point: Is it thus evident, as we have seen, that persons of a greater *Quality*, and higher *Station* in the world, have an higher and more difficult duty to fulfil, and lie under much greater *Obligations* to Do Good than other Men: And have we so much Reason to believe, that those very *Advantages* which encrease both their *Duty*, and their *Obligations*, are at the same time but too apt to prove their *Lets*, and *Hindrances*, in the fulfilling of it: It must then remain, that either such persons as these must take a more than ordinary Care of themselves, or they shall more hardly be saved than those of an inferiour Rank: Whose *Duty* is more *Easy*, Whose *Temptations* are much fewer; Who have neither so great a *Task* to fulfil, nor so many *Difficulties* to encounter with in the fulfilling of it.

Which being so, let us Consider,

II^{dly}. What influence this Reflection ought to have upon All of us:

1. Upon those who are *Great*, and *Rich*, and *Honourable* in the *World*, to stir them up to an *Extraordinary Care* of their *future Happiness*.
2. Upon *all others*; to engage them to a *patient acquiescence* under the *meanest Circumstances*.

And, 1st. The Consideration of what we have now been discoursing, ought to stir up all such persons as these, to a more than *Ordinary Care* of their *future Happiness*.

This is a consequence, that if Men believe any thing at all of *another Life* after this, must be allow'd to be the natural result of what we have been discoursing. For if both the *Duty* of such *Persons* be greater, and their *Temptations* stronger than other Men's; If God expects a more excellent Service from *Them* than from those of a lower Rank; and yet they are expos'd to more Difficulties, and Hindrances, than Others usually are, in the fulfilling of it: What can we conclude but that it will undoubtedly concern them, as they tender their Eternal Welfare, to look very carefully to themselves, that they neither come short of their *Duty*, nor are carried away from it, by the strength and force of their *Temptations*?

But here then a *Difficulty* will arise; For if the *Case* be such as we have now shown, and as indeed our *Saviour Christ* himself hath set it out
to

to us: If such *Persons* as These shall hardly be saved? and It be easier for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: Will not this rather serve to discourage, than to quicken their Endeavours after it? And lead them sooner to the Epicure's Conclusion, *Let us Eat and Drink, for to morrow we shall die*^v; than to the Christian Resolution of striving to enter in at the Straight Gate? because many will seek to enter in, and shall not be Able^w?

This indeed seems to be a very reasonable Objection, and which ought to have a fair, and satisfactory, Answer made to it. And therefore,

Ist. It must be confessed, that were we to judge of this matter according to the principles of *Corrupt Nature*, there might be but too much Cause for such persons to give way to these kind of Reflections, and look upon their Condition as little better than *Desperate*. And so much our Saviour Christ himself implies, *Matt. xix. 26. With men this is impossible*; that is to say, Were we to look no farther than our own *Natural Strength*, without considering what the *Grace of God*, and the *Power of his Holy Spirit*, is able to do, we might well reckon the Difficulties that arise to hinder the *Salvation of Rich, and Great Men*, to be insuperable. But *With God, All things are possible*; He can make that which is thus hard of its self, become *Easy* to us; and

^v 1 Cor. xv. 32.

^w Luke xiii. 24.

remove all just cause of *Despair*, and even of *Complaint*, from us upon that account. And therefore,

2^{dly}. I say, that such *Persons* as these ought not to be at all *discouraged* at the consideration of any of these *Difficulties*, because though their *Duty* be indeed *Greater*, and their *Temptations* stronger, and their Case more dangerous, than other Mens; yet if they do but use their earnest Endeavours, God will give them such a *measure* of his *Grace*, as shall be sufficient to enable them to overcome all these *Impediments*, and to fulfil the *duty* which he requires of them. *Jesus said, With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.* As if He had said, To enable a *rich man* to despise his *Wealth* in comparison of his *Duty*; to support him against the *Temptations* it exposes him to, and to incline him to make that good use He ought of it; is indeed a Work which *Humane Strength* either could not at all, or not without some extraordinary *difficulty*, be able to accomplish. But let not this therefore discourage any of you; for though *Humane Strength* cannot do it, a *Divine Power* can. And if there must be a *double portion* of *God's Grace* bestow'd upon such persons, or they cannot be *saved*; let them do their parts towards it, let them *pray fervently*, and *labour sincerely* to discharge their *duty*, and they shall have a *double portion*, rather than they shall perish for want of it. God will give them an *Assistance* suitable to their needs, and their *Grace* shall be as much greater

greater than that of *Ordinary Christians*, as their *duty*, and *difficulties*, are Greater than *Theirs*.

Nay, but this is not yet all: For, 3^{dly}, *Our Saviour* not only assures us, that such persons shall have a *measure of Grace* proportionable to their *needs*, though that had been sufficient to remove all grounds of *despair* from their *minds*: But to encourage them yet more to a *Carefulness* in their *duty*, he has promised, that if they do thus heartily labour to fulfil it, they shall both receive a sufficient *assistance* from *God* to support them now, and a more glorious *Reward* of their *Piety* hereafter. *Ÿ. 27.* Where when *St. Peter* remark'd to Him, how they had despised all their present concerns to *follow* him, and become his *Disciples*; *Behold, we have forsaken all, and follow'd Thee: What shall we have therefore?* He not only pronounces a *Blessing* upon them for their *Piety*, *Ÿ. 28.* *Verily I say unto you, that ye which have follow'd me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the Throne of his Glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve Thrones, judging the Twelve Tribes of Israel;* but makes a *General Promise* to all others, who should not suffer any of those things they enjoy here, to draw them away from his *Service*, that they should receive a more exceeding reward for it, *Ÿ. 29.* *And every one that hath forsaken, that is, has either actually left them, or hath in his mind so far given them up, as to resolve not to value any of these things in comparison of his duty; Every one that hath thus forsaken*

forsaken Houses, or Brethren, or Sisters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands for my Names sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit Everlasting Life.

And now when this is the *Case*; That such *persons* as these are both assured that God will bestow upon them a more *plentiful portion* of *his Grace* than upon other men, and thereby render their *duty*, though so much *Greater* in its *self* than that of others, yet *to them* as *easy* as our *Lesser Engagements* are to us; Who as we have not their *Difficulties*, so neither may we ordinarily expect such an *Assistance*, as shall be given to them, to help and support them: And are moreover promised, that their *Piety* shall receive a proportionable reward; That they shall as much *outshine* others in the *Firmament* of *Glory* hereafter, as they now exceed them in their *Power*, and *Riches*, and in what is yet more valuable, their *Ability* of doing *Good* here; It must certainly be very much their fault, and what will render them more inexcusable than *Other Men*, if they be not in some measure as *careful* of *themselves*, and as *zealous* in their *duty*, as all these *Advantages* engage them to be; and as, for other Mens sakes as well as their own, we ought to wish that they would be.

But this is not all the *Use* we are to make of these *Reflections*; Which ought not only to *increase* the *Piety*, and *inflame* the *Zeal*, of those above us; but at the same time,

2^{dly}, To reach us, whom it has pleased God to place in a *lower*, but, if we knew our own Happiness, a *no less blessed Estate*; to be *perfectly contented* with our Condition, though it should chance to be never so *poor*, or *mean*, in the World.

For, since this present Life is but a *time of Tryal*, a *State* in which we are not to continue very long, and then whatever our *portion* here may be, if we do but manage ourselves as we ought in it, we are sure we shall be exceedingly Happy in the other World: Wherefore should we *murmur*, or *repine*, against God's Providence? As if *Eternal Glory* were not a sufficient recompence for any trouble, or misery, that we can undergo in the pursuit of it.

I confess, I am not so great a *Sceptick*, as to go about to persuade you, that there are not *many Advantages* in a plentiful portion of the Good things of this present World: Or that it is all one, whether a man be *poor*, and *despised*, or else *Rich*, and *Honourable*, in it. But yet this I may affirm; that to him who is accustomed to think of the *Future State*, and has a quick and lively apprehension of the *Happiness* of it upon his Mind; the wants of this present life will be very supportable. And while we can look up to Heaven, and there see the poor *Lazarus* in *Abraham's* bosom, we shall be able to find in it an *Argument* not only for Contentedness, but even for Comfort too in the Reflection; though we

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should

should chance at the present to lie, as he once did, at the *rich man's door*, and feed on the *Crumbs that fall from his Table*.

And, Oh! that it would please God, we might all so seriously meditate upon these things, that whatever our *portion* now be, we may have a blessed reversion in *Heaven*; where alone true *Happiness* is to be expected by us.

Consider, I beseech you, the *Time* is coming, it cannot be far off, when we must all lie down in the Grave: When the Rich, and Mighty, shall as certainly *die* as the *Poor*, and *Miserable*; and carry none of their *State*, and *Grandure*, along with them. When all *titles*, and *distinctions*, shall be forgotten; and the *greatest Monarch* stand with as little Advantage before the *Judgment-Seat of Christ*, as the meanest of his *Vassals*.

And what will it then avail any of us, that we have been, it may be, *Great*, or *Honourable* on *Earth*, if we must from thenceforth be *Miserable* to all Eternity?

How shall we then begin to envy the *Blessed Fortune* of those men, whom we were wont to despise heretofore? We thought their *Condition* to be sad, and miserable: We esteemed them neglected of God, the scorn of *Men*, and out-cast of the people. But alas! now we see the difference; and how much more fortunate a poor Good Man is in the meanest Estate, than the Sinner in all the height of his most flourishing Condition.

O! may

O! may we every one of us so effectually ponder these things, that whatever *temporal Blessings* we now enjoy, yet our portion may not be in them: Nor that be ever objected to us, which *Abraham* here called the *Rich Man* in our *Text* to consider;

Son, remember, that Thou in thy life-time hast received thy Good things, and likewise Lazarus Evil things; but now He is comforted, and Thou art tormented.



S E R M O N I V.

Preach'd at the Reviving of the

GENERAL MEETINGS

OF THE

Gentlemen and Others

OF THE

County of DORSET:

IN THE

Church of St. Mary-le-bow,

December the 2^d. 1690.

1 John iv. 21.

*And this Commandment have we from
Him, That He who loveth God, love
his Brother also.*



WHEN our *Saviour* had finish'd his
Other Business upon Earth, and was
now just ready to *Offer* up himself for
our *Salvation*; We read in St. *John*,
that the *Subject* wherewith he chose to finish his
Preaching

Preaching was this *Exhortation*, *John* xiii. 34. That they should *love one Another*; *As I have loved you*, says He, *that ye also Love one Another*.

And to shew that this was indeed a *Commandment* of the greatest *Value* to Him, He not only chose the most proper *Time* for the inculcating of it; When he was Himself about to give the greatest *Example* of this *love*, that was ever heard of in the *World*, *Rom.* v. 7, 8. but he pressed it with the strongest *Engagements* too: He left it to them as the *Badge*, and *Mark*, of their *Discipleship*; the very thing that should *distinguish* them from all the rest of the *World*, and shew them more than all their *Miracles*, all the *mighty Works* that they did, to *Belong* to Him, *John* xiii. 35. *By this shall All Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have Love One to Another*.

And as if this had not yet been sufficient to declare his concern for this *Duty*, He again returns, in the *Close* of his *Discourse*, to the same *Topick* of *Love* with which he had begun it; and presses it with another *Consideration*, and that if possible, more likely to prevail with them than the foregoing. He tells them that this would be the *Only* way to find any favour from *God*, or any *Kindness* from *Himself*. That if they *Loved one Another*, then He also would *Love Them*: But otherwise they must not expect to be at all regarded by Him, *John* xv. 10. *If ye keep my*

Commandments ye shall abide in my Love; even as I have kept my Father's Commandments, and abide in his Love. And what the Commandment was that he there chiefly meant, you may see x. 2. And this is my Commandment, says He, that ye Love One Another. And again x. 17. These things I command ye, that ye Love One Another.

Now when such was the *Value* which it pleased the Blessed *Jesus* to put upon this *Duty*, we ought not to wonder if We find his *Apostles* every where very careful to inforce it upon us.

St. Jerome^b has told us that it was one of the most *Ancient Traditions* of the *Church*; that *St. John* being grown to a very great *Age*, so that he was no longer able to support Himself, was carried every day by the *Disciples* to the *Church*; where tho' his Voice was so feeble that He could not *Preach* to them, yet he never fail'd every *Day* to instil this *Precept* into their *Hearts*, *Little Children Love one Another.*

The *Christians* after some Time growing weary of hearing nothing else but this one *Exhortation* from Him, and wondring what the meaning of it should be, took the freedom to ask Him the *Reason* of it. He answer'd, in these words, worthy, says that *Father*, of *St. John*^c; that he therefore chose out this above all other *Exhortations* to *Press* upon them, be-

^b Hieron. in Galat. vi. 10. p. 99. E.

^c Qui respondit dignam Johanne sententiam: Quia preceptum Domini est. Et si solum fiat, sufficit. Hieron. ibid.

cause our Saviour had *Commanded* this above all other *Duties* to be *Observed* by them; and that this one thing well practised, would *alone be enough to bring them unto Salvation*.

But we need not recur to any *Apocryphal Traditions*, to learn how great a Care St. *John* had to stir up his *Disciples* to this *Duty*. The *Epistle* we have now before us is a sufficient *Proof* of it: Wherein he at large *Comments* upon our *Saviour's Text*; and sets forth to us *Our love to One Another*, as the great Evidence of our *Love to God*; and both the *One*, and the *Other*, as alike required of every true *Christian*: *If a Man say I Love God and Hateth his Brother, He is a lyar^d*; *For he that loveth not his Brother whom He hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this Commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God, love his Brother also.*

Such is the *Concern* we All have in this *Duty*; and 'tis for the more effectual Discharge of it, that we are now met together in this place: To stir up one another to a *Christian Love*, and *Charity*; and in some sort revive one of the most ancient *Customs* of the *Church*, those *Feasts of Charity*, which the *Apostles*, or rather our *Saviour Christ* himself, in his *last Supper* began, and the first *Ages* of the *Church* never fail'd religiously to observe.

^d 1 Joh. iv. 20.

And 'tis in pursuance of the same *design*, that I have chosen these *Words* of *St. John*, to be the *Introductory Subject* of this *Solemnity*, and I hope a *Happy Augury* of the future *Blessed Effects* of it; wherein I shall consider these *three things*:

- I. What the *Nature* of the *Duty* here proposed is, *Of Loving One Another*?
- II. To what *Persons*, and in what *Proportion*, this *Love* is to be *Extended* by Us?
- III. What *Obligations* our *Christian Profession* lays upon Us to such a *Charity*?

These are all plainly pointed out to us in the *Words* of the *Text*; and will I suppose afford us no improper *Subject* for Our present *Reflections*. And,

I. We will consider, What is the *Nature* of the *Duty* here proposed to Us, *Of Loving One Another*.

It has been the Wonder of many, who have not sufficiently enquired into this Matter; How it comes to pass that a *Virtue* so much talked of amongst all Others, and so justly *Celebrated* by our Selves too, as that of *Friendship*, should yet have found so little place in the *Gospel* of *Christ*: Insomuch that I cannot tell whether it has been Once recommended to us, either by our *Saviour*, or his *Apostles*.

This

This *Reflection* is that may be apt at first sight to startle the Thoughts even of a *Good Man*; and tempt him to entertain a much meaner Opinion than is fit of our *Religion* upon the account of it. That it has taken so little care for the Improvement of that which all the *World* has ever thought not only one of the greatest *Blessings*, and *Comforts* of *Life*; but one of its greatest *Ornaments* too; the Noblest *Privilege*, and *Advantage*, of our *Reasonable Natures*.

But indeed there is nothing that more argues the *Perfection* of *Christianity* than this: Nor which better exposes the narrowness of *Soul* in all Other *Men*, and *Professions*, besides.

For what is it in Effect that we understand by *Friendship*, but a *Great Love*, and a *Dear Affection*? A *Desire* of *Doing* all the *Good* we can to Him whom we call our *Friend*: And that expressing its self in a sincere *Endeavour* of *serv- ing Him*, and *promoting* his *Interest*, to the utmost of our *Power*. In short, such a *love* as produces a *Mutual Union* of *Heart*, and *Will*, between the *Persons* who stand in this *Relation* to one another; and makes every thing that be- falls either, whether *good* or *bad*, alike to both of them: As if there were but *one common Interest*, as there is but *one common Mind*, and *Affection*, betwixt them.

^c "Ανδρ γὰρ φίλων εἰδὲς ἀν' ἑλοῖτο ζῆν, ἔχων τὰ λοιπὰ αἰσθὰ πάντα.
Arist. Eth. l. viii. c. 1.

This

This is that which we call *Friendship*: And this the *Philosophers*^f restrain'd within the narrow bounds of one, or two, or at most of a very few; Whom either *Country*, or *Relation*; *Parity* of *Age*, or *Similitude* of *Manners*, and *Dispositions*; The *Chance* of *Fortune*, or the *Accident* of *Education*; but above all a mutual love of *Virtue*, and *Probity*, had brought together, and united within the sacred *Bonds* of it.

But *Christianity* has set open the *Enclosure*; and cast off the *Name*, which had indeed but spoil'd the *Virtue*: And made that common to all the *World*, which was before confined to a few particular *Persons*.

Instead of a *Narrow Friendship*, It has taught us that which is more Noble, and Divine, an *Universal Love*, and *Charity*: And commanded us to treat *All Men whatsoever*, in the same manner that Others were wont to Do those whom they call'd their *Friends* heretofore.

Thus has *Christianity* not destroy'd, but perfected *Friendship*; both Exalted the *Nature*, and Enlarged the *Object* of it. And if notwithstanding All this we still find the *World* as far from *Loving One Another* as before: If their *Charity* be as small, and their *Friendships* as confined, as if no such *Commands* had ever been deliver'd to us; yet this serves only to reproach our own *Perverseness*, but ought not at all to

^f Arist. *Eth.* lib. viii. c. 7. Cic. *de Amic.* *Fugiendas esse nimias Amicitias.*

^g Hence Clem. *Alex. Strom.* l. 2. p. 377, 378. Defines the Christian *Ἀγάπη* to be *ἑκτίμια φιλίας καὶ φιλοστοργίας.*

prejudice

prejudice the *Excellency* of the Gospel, that has call'd us to so much a more *Perfect*, and *Generous*, discharge of this *Duty*.

Now this will lead us into an *Easie Apprehension*, of the *Nature*, and *Offices*, of that *Love* we have here recommended to us.

There are but few, if any, so *Morose* and *Ill-natured*, As not to have some *Person* or *Other* whom they *Esteem* in a peculiar manner to be their *Friend*; and *love*, and *value*, beyond all Others, as such. Here then let us fix our thoughts; let us consider what that *Kindness*, and *Affection*, is, which we have for *such an One*, and that will give us a *sensible Knowledge* of what we ought to have for *All the World*.

But however, to be a little more particular as to this Matter.

1st. He that will *Love his Brother* as he is required to do, must above all things take Care to prelerve a *Sincere Affection*, and *Good Will*, towards Him. By which I mean, not only that we must not Entertain any *Hatred*, or *Malice*, in our *Hearts* against any; much less Cherish any *Envious*, or *Uncharitable Thoughts*, any *Unchristian Prejudices*, or *Resentments*, against our *Neighbour*; howsoever we may chance to have been *provoked*, or *injured*, or Otherwise *offended*, by Him: But that, on the contrary, we should always keep up in our Minds a *real Kindness*, and *Affection*, towards Him.

This is the *first thing* required of us, the *Ground*, and *Foundation* of this *Duty*; and with-

out

out which all our *Outward Actions* will be *False* and *Hypocritical*. 'Tis an Easie matter for Men to carry it fair to One Another, when yet at the same Time, they are far from having any real *Love* in their *Hearts* for One Another: And there may be Reasons enough to persuade the Most *Uncharitable* Persons so to do. It may be they should *run some Hazard*, or *sustain some Loss*, by shewing their *Resentments*; and then their *Fear*, and *Interest*, will engage them to *Dissemble* their *Aversion*. Perhaps the Person whom they hate is out of their reach, is *too Great*, or *too Cunning*, to be Openly struck at by Them; and the way to do him a Mischief, is to hide the *Malice* of their *Souls* towards Him. And thus their very *Kindness* is their *Crime*: And the *Colour* they put upon their *Ill-will*, adds only the Guilt of *Falseness*, and *Hypocrisie*, to their *Uncharitableness*; and the more encreases both their *Sin*, and their *Punishment*.

But true love must begin in the *Heart*; it must be *Honest*, and *without Disguise*^h: And then, though we should never have an Opportunity to make any *particular outward Expressions* of it to our *Brother*, as 'tis certain that to a great *part* of *Mankind* we never shall, yet God will accept this *inward Disposition* of the *Mind*; and our *readiness to do him good*, shall be esteemed, as if we had effectually *done* it to him.

^h Rom. xii. 9.

Here therefore our *Love* must begin, but it must not stop here: There is more than this required of us towards *all the World*; to those whom we have never *seen*, nor perhaps shall ever have any the least *Knowledge* of. And therefore,

2dly. To this inward *Affection* of *Mind* towards *one Another*, we must in the next place add those *General Instances* of *Kindness* which we owe to *All Mankind*; and which, if our *Love* be sincere, we shall *naturally* pay to them.

Now such I Esteem, first our *Desires*, and then our *Resolutions*, as far as in us lies, to promote the *Good*, and *Welfare*, of our *Brother*. And both these shewing themselves upon all Occasions, in a *Real Complacency*, and *Satisfaction*, at every thing that *Happens Well* to him; as on the Other side, in a true *Condolence*, and *Trouble*, for any *sad Accidents* that shall at any time befall Him.

This is what *St. Paul* excellently sets out to us, in the *Example* of that concern which the several *Members* of the *Natural Body* have for *One another*, 1 Cor. xii. 26. For as in that, if *One Member* be *Gratified*, *All the Others Rejoyce* at it; Or if *One* receive any *Harm*, or *Injury*, *All the rest* bear a share in its *Affliction*: So here, whether we consider our selves only as we are *Partakers* of the *same Common Nature*; Or more *particularly*, as we are *Members* of the *same Mystical Body* the *Church*; Or yet more especially, as we are of the *same Country*,
and

and *Civil Society*, under which we *live*; to say nothing now of what yet ought not to be forgot on this *Occasion*, viz. Of that still nearer *Relation* we stand in of *Friendship*, and *Acquaintance*, as we are all of the same *County*, and so in that respect too more than Others, *Brethren* and *Neighbours* to one another: We ought certainly upon all these Accounts, to bear a *Common Concern* for, and *Affection* towards, each other; and be pleased at whatever *Good* befalls Any of us; and be *troubled* at any *Evil*, or *Calamity*, that we know lights upon any other, as if it had in some measure been our own Case.

But we must carry Our *Charity* yet farther: And to this *Affection*, and *Disposition of Mind*, towards our *Brother*, add,

3^{dly}. Our *Endeavours*, as we have Opportunity, to shew our *Good will* to Him, by all *Real Acts of Kindness*, and *Beneficence*.

This is the last *Office* which this *Love* requires of us to compleat our *Duty*, and without which we shall still be found to come short in it.

Now these *Expressions* of our *Charity* may be of two very different *Kinds*, and as such will lay very different *Obligations* upon us: Either (1st.) Such as *All Men* are able, and ought at *all times* to shew their *Love* by, and that towards *All the World*: Or else, (2^{dly}.) Such as some *certain Persons* only are capable of *Exercising*; and that but towards a *few Men*, and at some *certain Times*, and upon some *particular Occasions*.

I. Of the *former sort* are * Our *Prayers* for our *Neighbours welfare*, and especially for that which is of *Greatest concern* to him, his *Everlasting Salvation*: * Our *Deprecations* of all *Evil* from him, both in this *World*, and in the *other*: * Our *Care* not to do any thing willingly that may turn to his *Hurt*, or *Detriment*: And lastly, to name no more; * Our *Thanksgivings* to *God* for all his *Blessings* to *Mankind*, and for all the *Good* which he is pleased continually to shower down upon our *Selves*, or *Others*.

These are such *Expressions* of our *Love* from which no *Man* can ever be *Exempted*. We *All* of us have it in our power to do thus much *Good* to our *Neighbour*, and we are therefore *All* of us to esteem our selves *obliged* so to do.

It was this which *St. Paul* meant, when he directed *Timothy*, 1 *Epist.* ii. 1. That *first of all*, or above all things, *Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and Giving of thanks* should be made for *All Men*: And that *St. James* commanded us *All*, to *Pray One for another*ⁱ. And what frequent *Cautions* our *Blessed Saviour* has every where given us, not to *Offend* our *Brother*^k, not to do any thing that may but by *Accident* prove *prejudicial* to him, every part of the *Gospel* sufficiently shews.

But these though the most *Extensive*, are yet in some respect but the *least* of those *outward Expressions*, we are to make of our *Love* to *One*

ⁱ James v. 16.

^k Mat. xviii. 6. Mark ix. 43.

Another.

Another. And there is much more to be done in Order to a *full Discharge* of this *Duty*. For,
 2^{dly}. We must to our *Prayers*, and *Care* not to do any *Injury* to our *Brother*, add our hearty *Endeavours* too, as *Opportunity* is given, and we are in a *Condition*, by all *means* possible to advance his *Welfare*.

It was a *Question* which *St. James* once put to some Men heretofore, who thought they might be saved by *Faith*, though they had no *Works* to make it *perfect*: *Jam. ii. 15, 16. If a Brother, or Sister, be naked, and destitute of daily Food; And one of you say unto him, Depart in peace, be you warmed, and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the Body; What doth it profit? Even so Faith, if it hath not Works, is dead being alone.* The meaning of the *Apostle* is this: That as that *Charity* is good for Nothing which stops in a few insignificant *Wishes* of our *Brother's Welfare*, and does not shew it self in *real Acts* of *Kindness*, and *Affection* to him, when he stands in need of it; so *Faith*, if it be not accompanied with a suitable *Practice*, is *empty*, and *vain*, and of no value in order to our *Salvation*. And sure we may as well invert the *Argument*, and conclude upon the same *Grounds*, That as *Faith* without *Piety* is of no worth; so a *Good Will*, and a *Kind Affection*, which does not upon *Occasion* shew it self in *Works* of *Mercy*, and *Charity*, is but an *Empty Name*, nor will ever be reckon'd in the sight of *God*, as *true Love*.

Love is an *Active*, and *Vigorous Principle*; and if it be *sincere*, whether towards *God*, or our *Neighbour*, will certainly shew it self in *Fruits* suitable to the *Nature* of it. But now what the several *Kinds*, and *Measures*¹ are, whereby we are to *Exercise* this *Love* towards our *Brother*, it is as impossible for me to describe to you, as to set before you all the several *Wants* of the *One*, and all the *Various Circumstances*, and *Abilities*, of the *Other* to relieve them. But as the ^mformer of these must be suited to the *Necessities* of our *Neighbour*, and be *directed* according as his *Wants* require our *Assistance*: So for the ⁿlatter; we must consider how far we are *able* to *supply* his *Needs*; and the more we do for him, the *greater* and *more certain* shall our *Reward* be.

In short; As the *Great Rule* which our *Saviour* has left us as to this Point, is this *General Direction*, *That we should Love our Neighbour as our selves*^o: So whoever will upon all these *Occasions* carefully apply first, and then sincerely follow the *Dictates* of it; I may venture to say, he will have this *Security*, that either he will not be much mistaken in the *Measure* of his *Charity*, or he will not run any great *Hazard* by it.

And this may suffice to have been spoken to our *first Point*, What the *Nature* of the *Duty*

¹ See 1 Joh. iii. 17, 18.

^m Mat. xxv. 35, 36. Rom. xii. 20.

ⁿ 1 Cor. xvi. 2. 2 Cor. viii. 12. & ix. 6, 7. Gal. vi. 10.

^o Mat. xxii. 39. compared with ch. vii. 12.

here recommended to us, of *Loving One Another* is? Our next business must be to enquire,

II^{dly}. To what *Persons*, and in what *Proportion*, this *Love* is to be Extended by us?

It has been always looked upon as the great Defect of the *Jews* in interpreting the *Rules* of *Charity* which *God* gave them heretofore under the *Law*; that they confined their *Notions* of a *Neighbour* to such a One as was either of the same *Religion*, or the same *Country*, with *Themselves*; and esteemed themselves to have been utterly disengaged from all *Obligations* to any *Others*.

But this *Mistake* our *Blessed Saviour* has now removed under the *Gospel*: He has abolish'd all ^P*Distinctions* of *Jew*, or *Gentile*; and taught us by a *Brother* to *Understand* All sorts of Men, whatever their *Country*, or *Religion*, be; as being all ^qdescended from the same *first Person*, the *Common Father*, and *Parent*, of us all.

So that when *St. John* therefore bids us to *Love* our *Brother*; and our *Saviour*, to *Love* our *Neighbour as our selves*; *St. Paul* tell us, That we must interpret these *Expressions* in their *Utmost Latitude*: And that however we may make some *difference* in the Exercise of our *Charity* as to the *Kinds*, and *Proportions* of it, yet we must not set any *Bounds* to the *Extent* of it; But *As we have Opportunity*, must *Do Good un-*

^P Acts x. 34. Gal. iii. 18, &c. ^q Gen. ix. 5. Acts xvii. 26.

to *All Men*; though *Especially* to them that are of the *Houſhold of Faith*^r.

And this is what I take to have been St. *Peter's* meaning in his 2 *Epist.* i. 7. Where ſetting down a particular *Catalogue* of our *Chriſtian Duties* both with reſpect to *God*, and to *One Another*; He bids us *Add to Brotherly Kindneſs, Charity*: Meaning I ſuppoſe thereby, that to that particular Affection which as *Chriſtians* we ought to have for *One Another*, and which he there calls *Brotherly Kindneſs*, we ſhould *Add Charity*, that is, a *General Love* to *All Men*, whatever their *Faith*, or *Profession* be.

This then is the *Fiſt*, and *Largeſt, Extent* of all of this *Duty*: But tho' it be therefore certain that We muſt, as we have Opportunity, maintain a *Common Love* towards *all Mankind*; yet it is no leſs certain, that we both may, and ought to have, a^s more *particular Regard* to thoſe whom the *Holy Scriptures* are wont in a more peculiar Manner to repreſent to us under the *Name of Brethren*. And therefore to this *fiſt Remark*, I muſt add,

2^{dly}. That we ſhould look upon our ſelves to ſtand yet^t more engaged as we are *Chriſtians*, to *Love One Another*; and that in a much higher degree, than we are obliged to do *thoſe* who are either yet *Enemies*, or *Strangers*, to the *Gospel of Chriſt*.

^r Gal. vi. 10.

^s Rom. xii. 10. 1 Pet. i. 22.

^t Gal. vi. 10. Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6.

And this I speak in the *General*, with relation to *All* those who are called by the *Name of Christ*, and adhere to the same *Foundation of Faith* with us; however they may otherwise differ from us, in some *lesser Points*, whether of *Faith*, or *Worship*.

It is a very sad Case, and I think much to be lamented by all Good *Men*, to consider what unreasonable *Heats*, and *Animosities*, there are among the Different *Churches*, and *Communities*, of *Christians* towards Each Other. With what Rashness and Uncharitableness, they *censure*, and *persecute*, and as far as they can, even *Damn One Another*: And plainly shew that they have more *Charity* for a *Jew*, or a *Turk*, than for a *Fellow Christian*, that does not come up in every Point to their own *Notions*, and *Opinions*.

This is certainly a *Great Fault*, and ought by all means to be corrected by Us. He who differs the most from Us, yet so long as He holds fast the *Fundamentals of Christianity*, must needs agree with us in much more *important Points* than any in which He departs from Us. And had we therefore but as much regard to the *Blessed Jesus*, and his *Gospel*, as we have to our own *Pride*, and *Self-conceit*, We might find much more reason to *Love our Brother* for the *Worship*, and *Praise*, and *Adoration*, which he pays with us to our *Dear Master*; than to hate him for not *subscribing* to our own *particular Canons*, and *Definitions*; and which 'tis Great Odds but if he should do, He would not *mend his Faith*,

Faith, but only give us the Satisfaction of *Er-
ring* together with us. I am sure He that *believes*
himself to be in the *right*, must own this to be
true of all others who *differ* from Him; and we
cannot doubt but that they think the very *same* of
Us.

But now what the precise *Distinction* is be-
tween those two *Kinds* of *Love*; Whether there
be any *particular Instances* of our *Affection*
owing to our *Fellow-Christians*, which we are
not obliged to shew to *Others*; Or whether all
the *Difference* be, that we are to pay the same
Offices of *Charity* to Both, only with more *Care*,
and a greater *Concern*, to the *One*, than to the
Other, it is not perhaps so easy to Determine.
Some have thought that that great *Command* in the
iii^d *Chapter* of this *Epistle*, *ſ. 16. Of Laying*
down our Lives for the Brethren, though it may
in *some Cases* be *worthily* extended to *Others*,
yet is *Matter of Duty* only to a *Fellow-Christi-
an*; or at least to such a *One*, as by this Means
may be likely to become so. But this is beyond
dispute; that whatever our *Love* requires from
us to *All Men*, must in a singular manner be
shewn to *These*. Our *Prayers* for them must be
more *fervent*; our *Desires* towards them more
warm; our *Concern* for their *Good*, both as to
this *World*, and the *Other*, more *tender*; than
for those who do not stand in the *same Relation*
to us. So says *St. Paul*, *Rom. xii. 10. Be kindly*
affectioned one to another, with Brotherly Love;

i. e. Have an *Ardent* " *Affection*, and as becomes *Brethren*, for one another: And St. Peter 1 Epist. i. 22. Seeing, says he, ye have purified your Souls in Obeying the Truth, through the Spirit, unto *Unfeigned Love of the Brethren*, see that ye Love One Another, with a pure Heart, fervently.

And as we ought to have a *Greater Regard* to all *Christians* in General, than to those who are not yet called By that Name, so I do not at all question

3^{dly}. But that even among *Christians* themselves we may make a *Distinction* too, and have a yet *Greater Love* for *Some* than for *Others*. As for Example; for those of our own *particular Communion*, than for Such as are *Strangers*, it may be *Enemies*, to it: For our *Friends*, our *Country men*, or our *Acquaintance*, than for Those who have no such *Relation* to us. But especially for those to whom we are tied, not only by the *Laws of Common Charity*, but by other particular Obligations, whether of *Nature*, or of the *Gospel*: Such as our *Parents*, and *Children*, and near *Relatives*; and above all, for Those who stand in the *strictest Bond* of all *Friendship*, The *Husband*, and *Wife*, to One Another.

This is what St. Paul evidently implies, 1 Tim. v. where speaking of those who were to be received into the *Publick Charity* of the Church, He takes especial Care, that if they had

^u Theodoret. in loc. Θερωτὶ ἔχει καὶ Ἀδελφοῖς πρέπεται τῷ πει-
εῖ ἀλλήλους διαδέσιν.

any *Friends*, and *Relations*, that were able to maintain them, they should be sure to *provide* for them; and not let the *Church* be *burthened*: *Y.* 4, 8. *If any Widow*, says he, *have Children*, or *Nephews*, let them learn first to *shew Piety at home*: But if any *provide not for his Own*, and especially for those of his own *House*, he hath *denied the Faith*, and is worse than an *Infi-*
del.

And the Reason of it is very Clear: Because the *more*, and *greater*, the *Obligations* we lie under to *Love One Another*, are, the *stricter* by consequence must our *Engagements* be so to do. And therefore where to the *Common Precept* of *Charity*, there are also super-added those *particular Ties* we have now been mentioning; it is not to be doubted but that we ought to have so much the more dear *Affection* for our *Brother*, the more near the *Relation* is wherein He stands to us.

But I must add yet one *Remark* more, with reference to this Point: For,

4^{thly}. Our *Christian Love* must be extended not only to all those whom we have hitherto been speaking of; but to Them also whom it may be we shall think of all Others, to have the least pretence either to the *Character*, or *Affection*, of a *Brother*, and that is to *Our very Enemies*.

Nor will this appear at all *Unreasonable* to Us, when we shall consider what other *Duties* our *Religion* requires of Us, and which *Natu-*
rally lead the way to this. A *Christian* either

has not, or I am sure ought not to have any *Enemy*. He may be *injured, abused, affronted*; He may be *persecuted, and spoiled*, by Unjust and Violent Men: And they who do this may in the Common Language of the World, be called his *Enemies*. But alas! The *Gospel* knows no such thing. It allows us not to account Any Man our *Enemy*; but by *forgiving* him obliges us, if we can no Other way prevail with Him, to make Him our *Brother*^w. And having done so, it cannot be thought much if, after this, it requires us to *deal* with him as *such*.

Or however, If we must speak with the *World*, and call such *Persons* our *Enemies*; yet still, even as *such*, we must Exercise this Duty towards them: *Mat. v. 43. Ye have heard, says our Saviour, that it hath been said, Thou shalt Love thy Neighbour, and Hate thine Enemy. But I say unto you, Love your Enemies; Bless them that Curse you, Do Good to them that Hate you, and Pray for them that despitefully Use you and Persecute you.*

But here then a Difficulty may arise, and it is this. For if the *Case* be so as I have now been representing it to you; If the *Gospel* of *Christ* requires such an *Universal Love* towards *All men*; What then shall we say? Are all Men to be esteemed alike by Us? And are we to make no *difference* between a *Stranger*, and a *Country-*

^w Rom. xii. 17, 20, 21.

man; or which seems yet more unreasonable, Betwixt a *Friend*, and an *Enemy*?

No, this is by no means the *Consequence* of of what we have now been speaking. * Indeed were *all Men* so *Good*, and *Perfect*; so *Just*, and *Honest*; so *Prudent*, and *Sincere*; as they ought to be; then I confess all *Distinctions* of this *Kind* would in great Measure be swallowed up: And every Man be as much a *Friend* to his *Neighbour*, as *any Man* possibly could be. Because then we should have no *Passions* or *Prejudices*, no private *Interests* or *Designs*, to carry on: But should All without disguise *Love One Another* as the *Gospel* commands; and should all *deserve* to be perfectly *trusted*, and *made Friends* by *One Another*.

And this *Height*, and *Perfection* of *Love*, *Christianity* would have us come up to here, and I hope shall One Day bring us All to in *Heaven*. There all the *little Enclosures* of *Friendship* shall be removed; and an *Universal Charity* succeed in the stead of them. But in the mean time, whilst we are in this *World*, where we cannot *extend* the actual *Exercise* of our *Charity* very far if we would; and have to do with Persons of several *Ages*, and *Parts*, and *Manners*, and *Degrees*; Of *different*, and often times *contrary*, *Interests* and *Inclinations*: Some of which are not *worthy*, it may be not *capable*, of that *full Affection* we bestow on Others; Many are Alto-

* See somewhat like this: Arist. Eth. l. viii. c. i. καὶ ἐνίοι τὰς ἀνθρώπους οἰοῦνται Ἀγαθὸς εἶναι καὶ φίλος.

gether *Strangers* to us, and we cannot tell what to think of Them; and not a few there be that will remain Our *Enemies*, let us do whatever we can to reclaim Them: Though our *Love* must in its *Extent* be *Universal*, yet the *Degrees* of it cannot be *Equal*, nor the *Expressions* of it *alike* to *All*; but some must receive much larger *Portions* of it than Others either *need*, or *deserve* to do.

The *Sum* then of this *Matter* is, in short, this. We must ^y *Love*, and *Pray* for *All Men*: ^z Must be *Kind*, and *Courteous*, and *Obliging* to *Every One*: ^a We must do no *Harm*, or *Injury* to Any; nor take pleasure in any *Evil*, that happens to any. We must *recompense* to no *Man Evil for Evil*: If a *Stranger*, nay if our *Enemy*, be in *distress* we must, if we can, relieve him: If he *Hunger*, we must *feed* him; if he *Thirst*, we must *give Him Drink*: And all this we must be ready, upon *Occasion*, to do to the *whole World*.

But then we must *pray* more *particularly*, and with greater *Zeal*, and *Fervency*, for those to whom we stand more *particularly Obliged*; for our *Fellow-Christians*, for our *Brethren*, our *Relations*, and our *Friends*. We must *love* them with *higher Affections*: ^b We must *desire* more *earnestly*, and *endeavour* more *heartily*, to do *Them Good*. We must *rejoice* more *exceedingly*

^y Mat. v. 44. 1 Tim. ii. 1.

^a Rom. xii. 9, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20.
Gal. vi. 10. 1 John iii. 17.

^z 1 Pet. iii. 8

^b 1 Pet. i. 2. iii. 8, &c.

in their *Welfare*, and be *touch'd* with a more *sensible* *Condemn* at their *Misfortunes*. And all this *still in proportion* as we stand either *more*, or *less*, *Engaged* to Them.

And especially for what concerns the other *Expressions* of this *Duty*, these must be yet more *restrain'd* by us; because we neither can *Extend* them *very far*, nor *Discharge* them towards *very many*, and therefore must be the more careful in the *Exercise* of them.

He who is the Best disposed to *Love* his *Brother*, yet cannot bestow *Alms* on *All* that are in *Want*; nor *Instruct* *All* that are *Ignorant*; nor *visit* *All* that are *sick*; nor *correct* *All* that are *vicious* in the *World*. And therefore both *Prudence*, and *Charity*, will certainly Oblige us in these, and the like Cases, to shew our *Love* to those *first*, either whose *Wants* are the *greatest*, or whose *Relation* is the *nearest* to us: That is, in other words, to such as have the *most*, and *best*, Pretences to *Our Kindness*.

And then lastly, for what concerns the business of *Friendship*; it is not to be question'd but that while we are careful to *Love All* as we ought to do, we may *Love some* in a more *peculiar Manner* than *Others*: And *Trust* them a great deal farther; and *consult* them with more *Freedom*; and *entertain* them with a *Higher Affection*, than we either *can*, or *need* to do, the *rest* of *Mankind*.

It is the *misfortune* of the *World*, that there are but a very *few* who are fit to be made *Friends* in it; and that enjoy the *Qualifications* requisite to such a *Character*. And therefore we must be content to make those so whom we can find, and having made them, we must *Love* them accordingly. Nor is it any want of *Charity* in me that I do not admit another into my *Bosom*, to *know* my very *Soul*, and *partake* of all the *Secrets* of my *Life*; to *love*, and *delight* in; to *trust* and *depend upon* in all *Emergencies*; who is *Cross*, and *Ill-natur'd*; who will neither *Love*, nor *Trust* me again; in short, who has neither the *Sense*, nor the *Piety*, to encourage me so to do: But rather, it would be an *Unpardonable Weakness*, and even *Folly*, in me if I should.

And this may suffice for the *Second thing* I was to speak to; Of the *Persons* to whom our *Love* is to be *Extended*: It remains only that we consider in the *Last* place.

III^{dly}. What *Obligations* our *Christian Profession* has laid upon us to the *discharge* of this *Duty*.

Now that *St. John* tells us in the *Words* of the *Text*: It has given us an *Express Command* for it, and that as *strict* as for the *Love of God Himself*: So that if we cannot doubt but that we are certainly engaged in the highest manner to *Love God*, we must conclude that we are Ob-

liged, in a suitable degree, to *Love our Neighbour also*.

But because this is a *Point* of very great Importance to us, and yet but too apt to be neglected by us; we will stop a little, and enquire somewhat more particularly, under how many *Engagements* we lye to the *Discharge* of it.

And 1st. It may be observed, That this is the *Law* of our *Nature*, as well as our *Religion*; and what our *own Reason*, no less than our *Christian Profession*, recommends to us.

For however a late ^d*Philosopher* among us, and who would be thought to have search'd more deeply into the *Principles* of *Human Nature* than any that ever went before him, may have endeavoured to persuade the World, That *Every Man is by Nature an Enemy* to his *Neighbour*: Yet I am sure both ^e*Aristotle*, and *Tully*, much *Wiser* Men, and no less *Curious* in their Researches, have given us a very different account of this Matter: That as all *Other Creatures* by *Nature Love* those of their *own Kind*, so much more should *Men* be esteemed *Friends* to One Another. And a Man must have very much debauched his own *Temper*, to be able to make the least doubt of it.

It was for this that *God* endued us with ^f*Reason* and *Understanding*, and gave us the *Benefit* of *Speech* to communicate our *Thoughts* to One

^d Hobbs de Civ. cap. xiii. §. 7. ^e Arist. Rhet. l. i. c. ii.
& Ethic. l. viii. c. i. Conf. Andron. Rhod. in Eth. Arist. l. viii.
c. i. Cic. de Fin. l. iii. De Nat. Deor. l. i, &c. ^f Vid. Marc.
Antonin. l. ix. §. 6.

Another;

Another; that by the means of these we might both the better discern the *Need* we had of *One Another's Help*, and the better Keep up a *Friendship*, and *Society*, with *one Another*.

It was for this he thought fit that we should all descend from *One Common Stock* and *Original*; and be as it were the *Members* but of *One Great Family*; that so our *Primitive Relation* of *Brethren* to each *Other*, might yet more reach us; what our *Love* to *each Other* ought to be^h.

It was, in short, for this, That *God* not only fitted us for *Society*, and endued us with a *Natural Desire* of it; but made our *Condition* such, that we could not possibly *subsist* without itⁱ.

And what must be the result of all these *Reflections*? Certainly it can be no *Other* than this; that an *Universal Love*, and *Kindness*, and *Affection* to each *Other*, is one of the most *Fundamental Laws* of our *Creation*: What a^k *Natural Instinct* reaches all *Other Creatures*; and what much more, Our *Reason* and *Condition* in this *World*, do at once both *incline* us to, and necessarily *require* of Us.

But 2^{dly}. If we Advance yet *One Step* higher,

^g Quintil. Declam. v. ^h Lactantii. Epit. cap. vii. Si enim facti ab Uno Deo, & orti ab Uno Homine, consanguinitatis jure sociamur; Omnem igitur Hominem Diligere debemus.

ⁱ Lactantii Epit. cap. vii. ibid. Nam cum imbecillior sit Hominum Natura, quam cæterarum animantium, quas Deus & instructas ad Inferendam, & munitas ad Vim repellendam figuravit; Affectum nobis Misericordiæ dedit, ut Omne Præsidium Vitæ nostræ in Mutuis auxiliis poneremus.

^k Arist. Eth. l. viii. c. i. Marc. Anton. l. ix. §. 6.

and consider our selves not barely as we are *Men*, *Partakers* of the same *Common Nature*, descended from the same *Stock*, and *Exposed* to the same *Wants*, and those no way to be supplied but by the mutual *Help*, and *Charity* of One Another, but as we are *Christians* too; this will yet more Enforce this *Command* upon Us.

For to take up only St. *John's* Argument in this very *Chapter*: If while we were yet *Sinners*, God so *Loved* us, as to send his *only begotten Son* into the *World* for our *Redemption*¹: If the *Blessed Jesus* had so great a *Kindness* for us, as to be content to leave the *Throne* of his *Glory*, and take upon him the form of a *Servant*, and being made in the similitude of a *Sinful Man*, to suffer *Death* upon the *Cross* for our *Salvation*^m: Then certainly we cannot but think it Our Parts to have some *Affection* for Those for whom God Himself had so much, and Love Those for whom the *Holy Jesus* thought it not too much even to die. It is the *Apostle's* own *Inference*, *Y. II.* of this *Chapter*, *Beloved*, If God so loved us, we ought also to love One Anotherⁿ.

But though this therefore be a very *Affectionate*, and one would think should be a very *Convincing Way* of *Reasoning*; and sufficient without any thing more to stir us up to a careful Discharge of a *Duty* so kindly recommended to us; Yet our *Saviour* has not left us, without more, and much stronger, *Obligations* to it: But

¹ 1 Joh. iv. 9, 10, 11.

^m Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8.

ⁿ See the same Argument, Ephes. v. 1, 2.

3^{dly}. Has Enforced this *Command* with all the most *Endearing Circumstances* that can I think be well imagined, to secure our *Obedience* to it.

For to consider it only in a few Particulars.

(1.) Are the *Words* of a *Dying Friend*, ever esteemed the most precious, and the likeliest to be observed, and retained by Us? This was the *Command* of the *Dying Jesus*^o. It was the *Subject* of his *last Discourse* which he made to his *Disciples*, as he was just going to *Offer up Himself* for Us.

(2.) Do Men usually take a great Care not to be found Defective in that which is the *distinguishing Mark*, and *Characteristick*, of their *Profession*? It is this very *Duty* by which we pretend, as *Christians*, to be Known from All Others: *By this*, says Christ, *shall All Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have Love One to Another*^q.

(3.) Again: Should it please God to set some particular *Value* upon One *Duty* above All the Rest, and *declare* to us that He does so; nay and *promise* that the greatest *Blessings* in the World should certainly be the Reward of it: Should he provide by all possible Means for the *Discharge* of this *Duty*; and assure Us that without it He will neither *forgive* us our *Sins*, nor *hear* our *Prayers*, nor *answer* our *Desires*: Would not every Man that has any Pretence to *Piety*, or *Religion*; that owns a *God*, and thinks

^o See Joh. xii. 34, &c.

^p See this Argument managed by St. Chryl. in 1 Cor. Hom. 32. at large.

^q Joh. xiii. 35.

thinks himself at all concerned to please Him, take a special Care not to be found *Wanting* in such a *Duty*?

Why all this is the very Case here. God has expressed a particular *Value* for this *Duty*. He has insisted upon it more than upon any One *Command* besides in the *Gospel*. He has preferred it to all other *Performances*, even to *Faith*, and *Hope* themselves: 1 Cor. xiii. 13. And declared^r that without it, the *noblest* of our *Performances* in any other Parts of our *Obedience*, though we should *work*^t *Miracles*, *speak* with *Tongues*, *remove Mountains*, nay though we should even *die* for our *Religion*, should all avail us nothing.

He has made it the very *Condition* upon which to *Pray* for the *Forgiveness* of our own *Offences*, that we *Forgive* our *Brother* his^v.

He has set it out as the *Trial* of our *Love* to *Himself*, that we should, in *Obedience* to his *Command*, *Love One Another*^w.

He has *instituted* the *Blessed Eucharist*, not more to keep up the *Memory* of his *Love* to us, than to *Engage* us by his *Example* to *Love* our *Brethren*^x.

And *lastly*, In the Account which He has left us of the *Day of Judgment*^y, he has represented this *One Duty* as almost the *Only Thing* that

^r See 1 Cor. xiii. 1 Joh. iii. iv, &c.

iii. 14, 15.

^t 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2, 3.

^u 1 Joh. ii. 9, 10, 11.

^v Mat. vi. 12, 14, 15.

^w 1 Joh. iv. 20.

^x 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. xi. 18, 20.

^y Mat. xxv. 35, &c.

shall be enquired into in Order to our *Everlasting Happiness*, or *Misery*. As if *Love* were in *One Word* the *Sum* of the *Commandment*^z: And as *St. John* told the *Ephesians*, This *One Precept* well *observ'd*, should *suffice* for their *Salvation*.

But I insist too long upon these *Reflections*: And 'tis more than time to descend to a *particular Application* of them.

And that could never have been more properly made than to *such* an *Audience*, and upon *such* an *Occasion*, as this.

For indeed, What is it we are now assembled for, but to *improve* our selves in the *Duty* I have hitherto been recommending to you? To *exercise* our *Charity*, and *revive* our *Love*, and raise up to Our selves a *New Opportunity* of *doing Good*, beyond what we have enjoy'd for many Years before.

This is certainly a very *Worthy*, and *Christian Design*: An Enterprize as *pleasing* to *God*, as I make no doubt, through your *Wise* and *Pious Conduct* of it, it shall be *Honourable* to our *County*, and *Satisfactory* to all those who shall contribute either by their *Presence*, or *Assistance*, to it.

And sure never was there a time when we stood more in need of such *Prudent*, and *truly Christian Methods*, of improving our *Love* and *Affection* to One Another.

^z See Rom. xiii. 8. 1 Joh. iii. 23, 24.

I need not tell you how *wide* our *Breaches*, how *deplorable* our *Divisions* are. To what *Dangers* they have already *exposed* us, you very well know; and whither they shall carry us, if not timely prevented, we have all the reason in the World to *fear*.

It was remark'd by ^b *Josephus* as the particular *Infatuation* of the *Jews*, that while their *Enemies* besieged them *without*, their *Factions*, and *Animosities* consumed them *within*: Infomuch that they mutually help'd to *destroy* One Another, at the very same time that the *Romans* stood ready to *devour* them all.

This was indeed a sad Case, and yet I would to *God* there were not somewhat too like it in our own *Circumstances*. We have a *Powerful*, and *Enraged Enemy* abroad, and the *Sword* is still drawn within our own *Bowels*: And yet as if this were not *Danger* enough for us, we are still *Hating*, and *Undermining*, and *Quarrelling* with One Another: ^c *Manasseh* against *Ephraim*, and *Ephraim* against *Manasseh*, and *Both* against *Judah*: And what shall we do in the End thereof?

And when such are our *Divisions*, have we not all the reason in the World to *bless God*, that has now, at such a *Time* as this, put it into your *Hearts*, to renew again this *Solemn Engagement*, to *Love*, and *Peace*, and *Charity*, with each other?

^b De Bell. Jud. l. vi. c. 1, 4, &c.

^c Isa. ix. 21.

Oh! may it produce all these Blessed *Effects* in our *Minds*! May it *calm* all our *Passions*, and *reconcile* all our *Differences*, if we have not already given them up as a *Preparatory* to this *Meeting*; and instill into us a *New Spirit*, breathing forth nothing but *Love*, and *Kindness*, and *Good-will*, among us!

And may our *Examples* influence All the rest of our *Country* to an *Imitation* of the like *Charity*! That if it be the Will of *God*, we may again Enjoy the *Blessings* of *Peace*, and see our *Jerusalem* Once more *Established* as a *City that is at Unity within it self*^d.

Now the *God of Patience and Consolation*, grant you to be like-minded *One towards Another*, according to *Christ Jesus*. That ye may with *One Mind*, and *One Mouth*, glorify *God*, even the *Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Amen.

^d Pfal. cxxii. 3.



SERMON

S E R M O N V.

Preached before the

Q U E E N

A T

W H I T E - H A L L,

MAY the 10th. 1691.

Hebr. iv. 1.

*Let us therefore fear, lest a Promise being
left us of Entering into his rest, any of
you should seem to come short of it.*



THESE Words are the *Application*
of the *Apostle's* Discourse in the fore-
going *Chapter*. He had there entred
on a Parallel betwixt *Moses* and
Christ; between the *Promises* which
the One made of a *Temporal Inheritance* to the
Jews heretofore, and the Assurance which the
Other has given of an *Eternal Reward* to Us

now. But as they notwithstanding those *Promises*, yet by their *Sins*, and their *Infidelity*, came short of them and perished in the Wilderness, so may this be our Case too. God has indeed called us to a Glorious Hope of *Everlasting Happiness*. He has given us all the Security we can desire that we shall One day be made-partakers of it. But yet there are *Conditions* required on our parts, both to Qualify us for this Happiness, and to Intitle us unto it: And if we neglect to fulfil them, we shall as certainly fail of *Ours*, as ever they did of *Their Expectations*.

Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

For the enforcing of which *Exhortation*, I shall observe this Method.

Ist. I will shew, that God has left us a *Promise* of *Entering into his Rest*; a *Promise* enough to satisfy all our Desires, and to engage our heartiest Endeavours after it.

II^{dly}. That nevertheless we may by our own fault come short of this *Promise*.

III^{dly}. That therefore we ought to be very *fearful* and solicitous lest we should do so.

IV^{thly}. That the best way to secure this *Promise* to our selves, is to take the Advice of the *Text*, and live in a continual fear of coming short of it.

And

And 1st. That God has left us a Promise of *Entring into his rest*; a Promise enough to satisfy all our Desires, and to engage our heartiest Endeavours after it.

This is that great fundamental Principle upon which not only the present Exhortation, but in effect the whole Gospel of Christ is built. Whatsoever our Blessed Saviour either *did*, or *suffer'd*, whilst he was on Earth himself, or hath commanded us to *do*, or *suffer*, after his Example; All the *Precepts*, all the *Revelations* of the Gospel, are but one continued Argument to convince us of this Truth. Insomuch that what St. Paul once said to the *Corinthians* concerning that other great Article of our Creed, the beginning of our Hope, and preparatory to our Glory, The *Resurrection of the Body*; I may no less apply here to this other of the *Life Everlasting* consequent upon it; If there be no such thing as *Another Life after this*, wherein we shall either receive the Everlasting Reward of our Piety, or suffer the Eternal Punishment of our Sins; then is our Preaching Vain, and your Faith also is Vain. The whole Business of Religion is a meer Cheat, and Illusion; *Let us Eat and Drink, for to morrow we Die*^b.

But Blessed be God! who has not left us the least room to doubt in a matter of such importance as this is to us: But has given us such noble Descriptions, such repeated Assurances, of

^a 1 Cor. xv. 14.

^b ——— 32.

our *Future Happiness*, as may abundantly suffice both to satisfy all our Scruples concerning it, and to ravish our Souls into the most earnest Longings, and Desires, after it. And tho' neither the weakness of our Capacities, nor the Measure of the present Discourse, will permit me to speak either very much, or very clearly, concerning it; yet I shall endeavour to give such an Account of the *Rest* here spoken of as may serve to answer the design of the Argument I have undertaken; and shew with what good reason the Apostle here exhorts us to *fear*, lest such a *Promise* as this being left to us, we should any of us be so unhappy as to *come short of it*.

Now two things there are that will be necessary to be considered by Us in order to this End: (1st.) The *Greatness*; and (2^{dly}.) the Certainty of our *Future Reward*. That the *promise* which God has left us of *entring into his Rest*, is as excellent in it self, as it shall be most surely made good to us, if we live so as to render our selves worthy of it: And therefore ought, upon both these accounts, to engage us to use our utmost diligence not to *come short of it*.

(1st.) For the former of these, The *Greatness* of that *Reward*, which God has promised to us in the Gospel: It is a Subject worthy indeed of all our Consideration, but impossible ever to be fully comprehended by Us, till we shall come to the Enjoyment of it. Even St. *Paul* himself, though admitted to the nearest Contemplation of of it that ever any Man was, yet could not find out

out any Expressions that would serve him to communicate his Ideas of it to us. He tells us that being caught up into Paradise, He heard Words unspeakable, and which it is not possible for a Man to utter 2 Cor. xii. 4. And all he could do was but to declare with *Isaiah*, on the like Occasion, 1 Cor. ii. 9. *That neither Eye has seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entred into the Heart of Man, the things which God hath prepared for Them that love him.*

And indeed it is, I think, none of the least Commendations of the Glories of the Other World, that they are not possibly to be comprehended by Us in this. That their Excellency so far transcends all the Notions of Happiness we have ever been acquainted with here, that we cannot, from thence, take any Measure whereby to judge of our Eternal Reward. But that after all our most enlarged Thoughts; when we shall have given the utmost scope to our Imaginations; have ranged through all the highest Instances of innocent, and unmix'd Felicity, that we have ever heard of in this life; nay, when we shall have done yet more, when we shall have indulged our very Fancies, and Desires, to invent some new Happiness beyond whatever any One could possibly have enjoyed in this imperfect state of Mortality; We may even then venture to say, that what God has prepared for them that fear him is somewhat exceedingly beyond all this; tho' what it is we are no more able particularly to declare, than we are to measure Omnipotence, or
to

to define what an Infinitely Good and Great God is able to do for them that *Love Him*, and whom therefore he both Loves, and will Bless, and Glorify together with Himself, to all Eternity.

But then as in speaking of God Himself, tho' we cannot comprehend his Nature, yet by putting together the highest Ideas that we have of Infinite Perfection, we do endeavour to raise up our Souls into some suitable Apprehensions of it: So here, it has pleased God to give such General Descriptions to us of the Glories of the Other World, as may suffice to let us into some imperfect Knowledge of it; and be more than enough both to raise our Desires, and to quicken our Endeavours after it.

For 1st. We are told that *Heaven* is a place free from all *Trouble*, and *Misery*; from all those *Hopes*, and *Fears*; those *Dangers*, and *Disappointments*; in a word, from all those *Evils*, and *Calamities*; that continually disturb us here, and render our highest Enjoyments very flat and insipid to us.

This is what our Apostle insinuates, when he calls it by the name of a *Rest*; *Let us fear*, says he, *lest a Promise being left us of entering into his Rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.* And again, *Y. 19. There remaineth therefore a Rest for the people of God.* But St. *John* more expressly declares, *Revel. xxi. 4.* where speaking of the *New Jerusalem*, our *City which is above*, He tells us, that *There God shall wipe away*

away all Tears from our Eyes, and there shall be no more any Death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.

Here we live in a *Vale of Misery*, exposed to Tryals, and encompassed with Troubles, on every side. He who is the most fortunate among us, is yet forced to measure his Happiness rather by the frequent Intervals he enjoys of Comfort, and Satisfaction; than by any absolute Freedom from all Evil, and Misery. We come into the World with a Cry, and go out of it with a Groan; and the Time we pass from the one of these Periods to the other, is for the most part filled up with little else than a melancholy Series of Sighs, and Tears; of Doubts, and Uncertainties; of Uneasiness at what is present, and Fearful Apprehensions of what is to come. So that were we to look no farther than the present Condition of mankind, one might almost be tempted to ask with *Job*, ch. iii. 20. *Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life to the Bitter in Soul? Which look for Death and it cometh not, and dig for it more than for hid treasures? Who rejoice exceedingly, and long when they can see the Grave? There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest. There the Prisoners rest together, they hear not the Voice of the Oppressor.*

But when we come to *Heaven*, there we shall find a perfect Deliverance from all our Troubles. No Pains or Diseases, no Weakness or Infirmary,

firmity, shall disturb our Bodies ; No Lusts or Passions, no irregular Appetites or Desires, shall discompose our Souls ; there shall be nothing to interrupt, or lessen, our Enjoyments. *Heaviness may endure for the Night* of this World, but when the Blessed *Morning* of Eternity shall spring forth, then pure Joy, and an un-mix'd Felicity shall spring up with it ; and nothing remain but the memory of our former Troubles, the more to increase our Comfort, and Satisfaction, in that absolute deliverance we shall then have obtain'd from them.

This is the first part of that Character which the Holy Scriptures have given us of our *Future State* ; It is a *State* free from all Evil and Misery : And how considerable a Blessing this is, if the sense of our present Evils be not sufficient to inform us, I shall leave it to the Authority of St. *John* to tell you, *Revel. xiv. 13.* where He makes use of this as an Argument to strengthen the Christians of those times in the enduring of any Tryals that could fall upon them for their Religion, that they should in a little time be perfectly deliver'd from all their Miseries ; *I heard a Voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write, from Henceforth Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord ; yea, saith the Spirit, for they Rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.*

But this is not yet all, for 2^{dly} ; When we come to *Heaven* we shall not only be set free from all other *Evils*, but from that which is the great

Source

Source and Foundation of all our Miseries, from *Sin* too: And from all those Consequences of it which now fill our Souls with so many sad Reflections, and make all our present Enjoyments a meer Dream and a Vision; the appearances of Happiness, rather than any real, and solid Satisfaction, viz. the *Fear of Death*, and the *Apprehension of Damnation*.

Here we live in a continual State of War, and Danger: Difficulties, and Temptations, encompass us on every side; and when we think we stand the most securely, yet even then we cannot tell how *soon*, or how *dangerously*, we may fall. The *Flesh* and the *Spirit*, those contrary Principles of which we are composed, still dividing us between our Desires, and our Duty; and forcing us often times when we the most stedfastly resolve, and the most earnestly endeavour to live well, yet to encounter no small difficulties in the doing of it: And in the sense thereof to cry out with St. Paul, *Rom. vii. 24. O Wretched Men that we are, who shall deliver us from the Body of this Death!*

But *Heaven* is a place Innocent as it is Glorious: There all these Conflicts shall have an End. No Lusts, or Passions; no Dangers, or Temptations; shall either draw us from our Duty, or put us to the least pain for the fulfilling of it. But it shall be our *Meat* and *Drink*, the Desire and Bent of our Affections to live Innocently: And what *David* once said of Himself, be much more perfectly accomplish'd in all of us, *Psal. xl. 8.*

Our

Our delight is to do thy will O God! yea, thy law is within our Hearts.

It is one great part of that account which *St. John* every where gives us of the *Blessed* in *Heaven*, that they spend their whole Time in little else than a continued Exercise of Piety and Devotion. In *praising God*, and *admiring his Perfections*, and *celebrating his Goodness*: But especially, in the most elevated Returns of Love, and Gratitude; of Joy, and Thanksgiving to Him for the great Work of our Redemption; and for all those Miracles of Mercy by which they have been delivered from Sin and Hell, and translated to such a blessed State of Happiness, and Glory.

And indeed what wonder if this shall be the Great Business of our Lives there, when as the same *St. John* tells us we our selves shall be made *like unto him*^c: Pure and Holy, Enemies to Sin, and to all those Temptations that have heretofore been wont to lead us into Sin. And being thus made *like unto God* in Holiness, we shall become *like him* in Happiness too. For then *Death*, and *Hell*, shall be destroy'd; *They shall be cast into the Lake of Fire*, *Revel. xx. 14.* And we shall sing for ever that triumphant Song of *St. Paul*, *1 Cor. xv. 55.* *O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory? —Thanks be to God who hath given Us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

^c 1 Joh. iii. 2.

But 3^{dly}, and to go yet farther; We shall not only then be set free from all our *Troubles*, and *Miseries*, from whatsoever is any way Grievous, or Afflicting to us in this World: But we shall in stead thereof be blessed in a full Enjoyment of the most perfect *Happiness* that our Condition shall then be Capable of, and that is a Great deal more than we are now able to conceive.

For, 1st. Our *Bodies*, which here are the Weight, and Burden of our Souls, neither to be supported without Care, nor kept under without Trouble; and which, when we have done all that we can, will yet many times afflict us with Pains, and Diseases, Weaknesses, and Infirmities; Sometimes expose us to grievous Temptations, and too often betray us into deadly Sins; to be sure always so clog, and depress us, that we shall at best be able to rise up but to very imperfect Discharges of our Duty; shall then be *Glorified*, and rendred a Habitation fit for so Divine a Spirit to dwell in. So our Apostle tells us, 1 Cor. xv. 43. *This Corruptible, says he, shall put on Incorruption, this Mortal, Immortality.* We shall not only receive our *Bodies* again out of the Dust, but we shall receive them in Greater Beauty, and Perfection, than ever they were before. They shall rise out of their Graves, as the Sun arises from beyond the Mountains of the East; Bright and Shining: Or rather as the Body of our Blessed Saviour when he appeared to St. Paul on his way to *Damascus*, *Acts ix.* and in comparison

parison whereof the very ^d *Sun* it self seemed to be but Dim, and Obscure.

And as our *Bodies* shall be thus Glorified, so our *Souls*, and all the powers and faculties of them, shall be no less enlarged. *Now we know in part, and see as through a Glass darkly^e*: He that is the Wisest amongst us, and has made the farthest Progress in Learning, is yet ignorant of a great deal more than he knows, and in what he thinks he understands the best, is often times mistaken. *But then we shall see face to face, and know even as also we are known.* All the Mysteries of our Faith, and the Secrets of our Redemption, shall be laid open to Us: And those Disputes which now so unhappily divide the Church, and disquiet the Minds of the best Christians, be for ever Determined; not by Force, but Conviction; not by Canons, and Definitions, but by an evident Light, and a clear, and distinct Perception.

This shall be the state of our Understandings in the Other World, nor shall our Wills be any less perfected. There shall be no Repugnancy to the Service of God; No Passions or Appetites to Cross, or Encounter, in the fulfilling of it. We shall be all Flame, and Love, and Devotion: Shall flee to our Duty with the Ardors of *Seraphim*, and shall feel such new, and unspeakable Joys, arising in our Souls from the performance of it, as now we are not able to conceive. On-

^d See Acts xxvi. 13.

^e 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

ly perhaps some pious *Votary* may now and then have felt some Antepasts of them; when having either overcome some great and violent Temptation, or else fulfilled some noble instance of Duty, he finds in Himself such a Serenity of Mind, such a chearfulness, and satisfaction of Spirit, proceeding from the Consideration of it, as exceeds all the Sensual Pleasures of the most Exquisite Voluptuary; but which alas! are as far short of that perpetual Joy, and Comfort, we shall then live in, as the best of our Performances here are exceedingly inferiour to what the constant discharges of our Piety shall be there.

And being thus prepared for a full Draught of *Happiness*, we shall not fail to enjoy the largest Portion that we can even wish for of it.

What the particular Ingredients of our *future Felicity* shall be, I am not able to say. But this we know, that We shall *live* in the *Presence of God*, in whose *Presence there is fulness of joy*, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for *Evermore*^f. We shall converse with *Angels*, and be translated to the *General Assembly, and Church of the First Born*; and to the *Spirits of just Men made perfect*^g.

There we shall meet with all those Great, and Wise; those Holy, and Excellent *Persons*, who in their several Ages have made up the Glory, and Ornament, of the Church Militant on *Earth*, and now shine as Stars in the Church Trium-

f Psal. xvi. 11.

g Heb. xii. 23.

phant in *Heaven*. Whose Vertuous Lives, and Patient Sufferings, we have either read, or heard of, with so much Wonder and Satisfaction. By whose Learning we have profited; whose Disciples we have professed our selves; and whose Examples we have look'd up unto, both for our Imitation and our Encouragement.

There we shall again be restored to our *Friends*, and our *Relations*, whom we have here left with so much sorrow and bitterness. There we shall behold the Blessed *Apostles* of our Lord and *Saviour*, and all the rest of that Noble *Army* of *Martyrs*, and *Confessors*, by whose constant *Labours*, and patient *Sufferings*, the *Gospel* first became publish'd to the World; and to whom therefore, as fellow-workers with *Christ*, we our selves have in part been indebted for our own *Salvation*. And lastly, to compleat all; There we shall behold the Blessed *Jesus* Himself the Great *Shepherd* of the *Sheep*, the *Author* and *Finisher* of our *Faith*; by whose *Blood* we were *Redeemed*, by whose *Grace* we have been *Sanctified*, and by whose *Merits*, and *Intercession*, we shall have then attain'd to all this *Glory*.

This is that Company to which we shall be translated, when we come to die. And then, think, if you can, what an unspeakable *Happiness* it must needs be to us, to pass from the vain Conversation of a peevish, and wicked World, to such an admirable Society as this: From the Follies, and Disorders, of sinful and frail Men, to the

the wise, and innocent, and endearing Conversation, of *Saints* and *Angels*.

I shall not for the farther improving of these reflections trouble you with any uncertain Conjectures, of the rare *Discourses*, the glorious *Entertainment*, the sincere *Friendships*, we may there expect to meet with. What new transports of *Joy* shall fill our Souls, when we shall begin to consider the *Temptations* we have overcome, the *Dangers* we have escaped, and the various *Troubles* we have pass'd through, in our Pilgrimage here on Earth; and compare all these with that Peace, and Security, we shall then enjoy in the Kingdom of Heaven.

But one thing there is that must not be pass'd by; and that is, that being now inflated in all this Great Felicity, we shall at the same time become secure of an *Everlasting Enjoyment* of it: That *Our Glory shall be Eternal, and our Reward no man shall take from us*. For tho' this be but a *Circumstance*, and so does not enter into the Nature of our Happiness, yet it is such a *Circumstance* that *Heaven* it self would hardly be compleat without it. But the Greater our Enjoyments were; the more it would trouble us to think that the Time was coming when all this mighty Treasure should be exhausted; and We should either altogether cease to be; or, which is worse, should be divested of our present Happiness, and become again as poor, and sinful, and destitute, and miserable, as once we were; or rather to speak more sensibly, as we here are.

Whereas now, we may without all Anxiety freely rejoyce in the Blessings we shall enjoy, and take no thought for the future: Being assured that our Felicity is founded upon the *Rock of Ages*; Permanent as *Eternity*; Firm, and Stable, as that God from whom it flows; in whom *there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning^h*; and with whom we also shall continue *for Ever and Everⁱ*.

This is that *Rest* of which our *Text* speaks: and of this

²dly. We shall most certainly be made Partakers, if we live so as we ought to do.

For God being not only most *True*, and *Faithful*, in all his Promises, and therefore incapable of deceiving us, but most *Powerful* too, and therefore able to Do whatever he pleases for us; it cannot be doubted but that what He has promised, shall most assuredly be made good to us: And therefore that if such a *Rest* as this be indeed set before Us by Him, we may, and ought to depend upon it, as a *faithful Saying, and worthy of all Men to be received^k*.

Now that the Holy Scriptures have encouraged us to expect such a *Rest*, is so very plain, that I do not see how any one can have the Confidence to doubt of it. They have not only assured us that there shall be a *final Judgment*, and an Irrevocable *Sentence of Happiness, or Misery*, pass'd upon all Mankind, according to what

^h James i. 17.

ⁱ 1 Thess. iv. 17.

^k 1 Tim. i. 15.
they

they shall have done here in the body, whether *Good*, or *Evil*: But they have moreover declared to us, that it was for this very Purpose that our Blessed *Saviour came into the World*, that He *Died*, and was *Buried*, and *Rose again from the Dead*, that He might both *Purchase* this great *Reward* for us, and receive full *Power*, and *Authority*, to *confer* it upon us. Either therefore we must say that all this is meer *Fable*, and *Romance*; that the whole Business of *Christianity* is but an *Idle Story*, that has nothing of *Truth*, or *Reality*, in it: Or if we think the *Gospel* to deserve any *Credit*, we must conclude that this *Promise* shall stand *Firm*, and *Immutable*, as that God who made it; That if we live according to the Rules of our Religion, we shall most certainly receive the *Reward* of it; that *Eternal Rest* of which our *Text* speaks, and which I have hitherto been endeavouring to describe to you.

It remains then that there is without all Doubt a Blessed Expectation reserved for us in another Life: but then,

II^{dly}. It is as certain, that we may by our own fault *Come short of it*.

For the *Promise* of this *Rest* is not *Absolute*, but *Conditional*. It depends upon a *Covenant* in which there are *Duties* to be fulfill'd on *Our Part*, as well as a *Reward* to be made Good on *God's*: And if we fail in the One, there is no reason to expect that He should perform the *Other*.

When our Saviour sent forth his Disciples to preach these *Glad Tidings of Salvation* to the World, we read in St. *Mark* that their Commission ran in these Terms, *Mark* xvi. 15. *Go ye into all the World, and preach the Gospel to every Creature: He that Believeth and is Baptized shall be Saved, but He that Believeth not, shall be Damn'd.* And what it is we are there to understand by *Believing*, we may see in the Parallel place of St. *Matthew*, Ch. xxviii. 20. *Go ye and Teach all Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to Observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.* From both which the conclusion is very plain, that if we mean to be *Saved*, we must not only enter ourselves into the *Church of Christ* by *Baptism*; but being so admitted, must *Believe*, and *Do*, whatsoever he hath revealed to us, or required of Us: And that without this we shall be so far from having any right to these *Promises*, that we shall incur the Greater *Damnation* for our Sins.

But this is not yet all; For if the Case be so as I have now shewn it to be, If the *Promise* of this *Rest* be *Conditional*, and we are no Otherwise intituled to the *Blessings*, than as we are careful to fulfil the *Duties* of the Gospel: Then I must add, that We may not only by our own fault come short of it, but that without a Great deal of Care we most certainly shall do so; and therefore ought the more to *Fear* lest we should fall from such Divine, and Heavenly Expectations.

The

The *Righteousness* of the Gospel, and that *Universal Obedience* which it requires of us in order to our Salvation, is not a Work of any Common, and Ordinary, Attainment. It calls us to a great deal more than many of us, I fear, are aware of; I am sure than most of us practise. To a Piety that has startled the Consciences of the most perfect Votaries; and once made even the *Apostles* themselves cry out, *Who then can be saved*¹? Those Severe Duties of *Mortification*, and *Self-Denial*; of *Taking up the Cross*, and *Following Christ*, were never designed for meer Pomp and Shew; only to exalt the Credit of the Gospel, and make it the more admired of Men; but as Helps, and Assistances, to conquer our *Passions*, to confirm us against all the *Temptations* of a Wicked World; and to raise us up to the utmost degree of *Piety*, that our Condition would admit of in it: For the Tryal of our *Faith*, and the Exercise of our *Patience*, and in short, to Fit us for Heaven, before they carried us to it.

Men may live as they please, and content themselves with a formal, and superficial Piety; and think it very well that they stand in the same Rank with the Generality of the World, and have as Good Pretences to Salvation as their Neighbours. But the Commands of God are not to be evacuated by the Wickedness of Men. God has plainly set before us the Terms of our

¹ Mat. xix. 25.

Salvation; What we are to *Believe*, and what to *Do*, if ever we mean to attain unto it. And if notwithstanding this, Men will be careless and negligent in their Duty; *Scepticks* in their *Faith*, and *Atheists* in their *Practice*; If they will scoff at the *Revelations*, and despise the *Morality* of the Gospel; laugh at the *Divinity* of our *Saviour Christ*, and the *Holy Ghost*, and Live so as if they did not believe there was any *God at all*: Let them applaud themselves, if they please, in their profane Cavils, and strengthen One Another in Wickedness; but let them know assuredly that there is a Time coming, when neither their *Number* shall *defend*, nor their *Sophistry* excuse them; *But that for All these things God will bring them to Judgment^m*.

Seeing then we not only may, but without great care we most certainly shall *come short* of that *Rest* which God has prepared for Us, it will very much behove us all

III^{dly}. To take the Advice of the *Text*, and *Fear* lest we should chance so to do.

This is the *Apostle's* own Inference in the Words before us, and such as I think naturally arises from the foregoing Considerations. For since it has pleased God to call us to such a Great, and Precious *Promise*, as I have before shew'd the *Rest* here spoken of to imply; to a Perfection of Glory and Happiness which neither any

^m Eccles. xi. 9.

Tongue can utter, nor any Thought conceive: What can be more reasonable than that we should make it our utmost *Endeavour*, the great *Business* and *Concern* of our *Lives*, earnestly to aspire after it, and by all means to qualify our selves for the obtaining of it?

The truth is, were we to discourse of this Matter only upon the *Principles* of right *Reason*, and according to the Common *Bent* and *Inclination* of our *Natures*, without any regard to the *Practice* of *Mankind*; One might justly think that instead of arguing with Men upon this Subject, we ought rather to Apologize for the Absurdity of making that an *Exhortation*, which every Man must do whether He will or no. *Happiness* is that which all Men Desire, and therefore should Endeavour to attain unto. And to exhort Men to be *Happy*, to pursue that which is to raise them to the highest pitch of Felicity that their Condition is capable of; What is this, but as if one should go about to argue with a *Covetous Wretch* not to neglect a fair Opportunity of growing Rich; or with a loose *Voluptuary*, to Eat and Drink, and fill his soul with sensual *Satisfactions*; that is, to endeavour by *Reason* to incline them to that, which their own *Appetites*, beyond all the *Reason* in the World, hurry them on to.

And yet tho' all this be most certainly True, that we do all of us Naturally *desire* that which will make us *Happy*; and it cannot be doubted but that 'tis this *Rest*, this Eternal *Reward*,

ward, in which above any thing the *Felicity* of Man does consist; I know not how, there is scarce any thing which Men Generally so much neglect, or so little seem to trouble themselves about, as This. As if the whole Business of *Religion* were indeed no more, than what some profane Men have call'd it, a piece of *State-Contrivance*; a *Device* to keep *Fearful*, and *Superstitious* People, in *Awe*: And the *Gospel-Promise* of a *Future-State*, a Refinement only upon the Old Poetick Hypothesis of *Elysian Fields*, and I know not what other *Dreams of Happiness*, no where to be found but in their Numbers.

Tell a Man how to establish his *Present Fortune*; shew him the way how he may accomplish his Ends in what he aims at in *this World*; and tho' perhaps the utmost of his Ambition be but to gain some little *Estate*, or *Honour*, or *Advancement*, which can neither reward his Pains, nor satisfy his Desires; yet you shall not fail to meet with a very ready Attention from Him. He will receive your Instructions with Greediness, and if they carry but never so little a Probability with them, you shall need no Perswasives to put him upon the practice of them.

But now speak to the same person of the vast Concerns of *Heaven*, and *Eternity*; Exhort him to consider how short, and uncertain, his Life here is; how fast it runs away, and in how little a Time the whole Stock of it will be exhausted; and that then *He must appear before the Judgment-*

Judgment-Seat of Christ, to receive the things done in the Body, according to what He shall have done, whether Good or Evilⁿ: And tho' by an Affectionate Application you may chance to warm Him for the present, or even force him, with *Felix*, to tremble at the thoughts of a *Judgment to come*; tho' your Arguments be strong, and his own Conscience concurs with you to convince him that these things are so as you represent them to Him; yet all the Effect shall be but this, that He will grow weary of the Admonition, and be uneasy till he can get away from you; and no sooner is he at liberty, but he begins presently to think how he may shake off those dull, and melancholy Apprehensions, your Discourse has raised in his Mind; and then He becomes the very same Man that He was before; goes on again in his *Sins*, and *Debauches*, and never considers that the End will be that *He shall perish for ever*.

Now this being the General Neglect, and Security, in which Men live, it cannot certainly but be very proper, not only to Exhort them sometimes to a greater Care; but, if it be possible, to convince them too of the Grounds they have to fear, whither such an Incogitancy as this will carry them?

And 1st. If their Indifference in this Matter proceeds from a real Belief that there is no such thing as *Another Life* after this, nor any Ac-

count to be given to God of all our Actions; that there is neither any such Eternal Portion of *Happiness* to be enjoy'd, or of *Punishment* to be undergone, as we have been told there is: This I confess will make their Neglect the more Rational; and we ought not to wonder, that they are not *afraid* of coming short of a *Reward*, which they do not believe was ever to be attain'd by them.

But then at least they ought to be very sure that their *Belief*, or rather *Infidelity*, as to this Point, is well-grounded, before they venture the Everlasting welfare of their Souls upon it. For not to say any thing of those Assurances which the Gospel has given us of our *Future State*, and the Authority whereof is founded upon such strong and convincing Arguments; that we see the greatest part of the wisest Men in all Ages have thought there was no reasonable Exception to be made against it: Do they believe that there is a *God*? That this World was not made without some *Cause* to produce it, nor is now *Govern'd*, and *Preserved*, without some Superiour *Power* to overlook and order the Affairs of it? This I am sure the *Gentiles* themselves have generally acknowledged; and I much question whether there was ever any Man so void of all Reason, as to be able seriously to make a Doubt of it.

But if there be a *God*, and if His *Providence* does overlook the Affairs of Men, there must needs be a *Future Judgment*, some Day of account in which He will render to every Man
according

according to his *Works*°; and those Vertues shall be rewarded, and those Vices punish'd in another Life, which we see oftentimes but little regarded in this.

Do they believe that they are themselves endued with *Rational Souls*; that they are not meer *Machines*, a little Mass of Clay, stamp'd with the *figure* of a *Man*, but by some purer Principle, rais'd above the Condition of the other Creatures that are below them? But then let them consider what these *Souls* are, and whether they may not possibly be of a *spiritual substance*, capable of *Existing* by themselves, when the *Body* falls into the *Dust*: And if they may, then let them think a little farther, whither they are to go, and what is to be done with them?

In short; Do they believe their own *Sense*, and *Experience*? Let them then tell us why their *Consciences* do so often check them for the *Sins* they commit, and force them many times to start, and tremble, at the thoughts of them: But especially then when they are nearest their *End*, and past all danger of *Punishment* in *this World*; unless it be, that their own *Hearts* then begin to misgive them, and force them at least to fear the *Judgment* of the *Other*.

But 2^{dly}; It may be, tho' they are not absolutely certain, that there is no such thing as a *Future State*, yet neither are they sufficiently satisfied

° Rom. ii. 6.

that there is, and this makes them the less solicitous about it.

Now if this be the Case, then I must confess that here again there may be some Reason why they should not be so vigorously concern'd for the business of Religion, as those who without all doubt expect a blessed *Reward* of their Labours. But yet still, seeing they are not sure, but that there may be another *Life* after this, and an eternal *State* of *Happiness*, or *Misery*, as we say there is; it must certainly be the wisest way not to be too secure; nor expose themselves to so great a Hazard, as either to *come short* of this *Rest*, if there should be such a Felicity to be enjoy'd; or to be lost and damn'd for ever, as they must be, should God chance to call them to an Account for their *Sins*.

And if such Persons as these, notwithstanding all their *Scepticism* as to this matter, ought nevertheless to *Consider, and Fear, and do no more Wickedly*; much more, ^{3^{dly}}, Should we who have no doubt at all of this *Reward*, be very careful not to *come short* of it; nor suffer any *present Interests, or Temptations*, to deprive us of our *Eternal Glory*.

It is the great Disadvantage of the Point before us, that in discoursing of the *Happiness*, or *Misery*, of the *Other World*, we talk to Men of somewhat at a great distance from them; of Blessings not to be enjoyed till after they are *Dead*, and that they Hope shall not be yet a while. Now this makes them for the most part
fo

so very Careless in their Provisions for it, and so little apt to be troubled with any *fears* about it. But yet, since we are sure we must *Die*, and we cannot tell either *How soon*, or in *What manner*, we may be cut off; and that should we chance to be surprized, and taken away out of our *present State*, before we have made any due Provision for the *future*, it will be impossible for us ever to retrieve our Neglect: Certainly all these Considerations ought to engage Us not to let any time pass in securing of so great a Stake; nor give any Rest to our Souls, whilst we have but any just Doubts remaining what shall be our *final Portion* for ever.

Such Reason therefore have we all to be very *fearful*, and *sollicitous*, about our *future Happiness*: And the more to excite us thereunto, let us consider,

IV^{thly}. That the best way to secure to our selves the *Promise* of this *Rest*, is to take Advice of the *Text*, and live in a continual *fear* of *Coming short of it*.

And that upon these two Accounts: Because (1st.) This will be the most likely to engage our *own Care*: And (2^{dly}.) To entitle us to *God's Favour*.

1st. This will be the most likely to engage our *own Care*.

For *Fear*, where it is not a *Slavish Terror* arising in the Mind from an *Apprehension* of *Punishment for Sin committed*, but a concern for the

Discharge of our Duty, lest otherwise we should offend God, and deprive our selves of that Reward which he has call'd us to; naturally puts Men upon the strictest Guard over themselves, and Care of their Duty. And therefore *Solomon*, who very well understood the Advantage of it, sets it forth to us as the first step to a Religious Life, *Prov. ix. 10. The Fear of the Lord*, says he, *is the Beginning of Wisdom*: As on the other side, *David*, when he would describe to us a *Sinner* of whom there was no Hopes, could not find out any better Character for him than this, that *He had no fear of God before his Eyes*, *Psal. xxxvi. 1*. And the reason of this is plain; Because where-ever there is such a *Fear*, it shews the Person who has it, to be endued with a just Sense both of his *Duty*, and of his *Danger*; of the *Necessity* there lies upon him to *Live well*, and of the great *Hazard* he shall run if he *neglects so to do*. Nay, it shews yet more; that such an one is not only *sensible* of all this, but does moreover, in the consequence of it, resolve to be very careful and diligent in the Offices of Religion; to serve God, and discharge his Duty towards him, that so he may obtain the *Reward* of it. And where there is such a Disposition as this, it is hardly possible that a Man should fail of accomplishing his Desires.

For if we look more narrowly into this matter, and consider what it is that keeps so many Christians in such a strange Security with Relation to their *future State*; we shall find it to
proceed

proceed from one of these two Causes: Either they are not sufficiently *sensible* of their *Obligations* to *Piety*, and of the *Necessity* there lies upon them to *Live Well*; Or else they *flatter* themselves in their *own Righteousness*; they think they are in a very safe way already, and need not aim at any higher Attainments. But now he who has this *Fear* continually upon his Mind, will not easily be deluded with either of these: But as he will be truly concern'd for his Salvation, so he will be always *afraid* that he is not so secure, as he ought to be, of it. And this will naturally put him upon yet farther Endeavours to get some New, and Greater, Victories over himself; to *Grow* in *Grace*, and come up nearer to *Perfection*, that so he may encrease in *Hope* too, and have still more full, and more comfortable Assurances, of God's *Mercy* to Him through *Christ Jesus*.

(2^{dly}.) As such a Fear will be sure to engage our *Own Care*, so will it be the best means to entitle us to *God's favour*.

For 1st, This will above any thing qualify us for the *gracious Assistance* of his *Holy Spirit*, to strengthen us in our Endeavours, and to enable us to discharge that Duty which is required of Us. *For God resisteth the proud, but giveth Grace to the Humble*^p. To the *Humble*, that is, to Those who are *fearful*, and *jealous* of themselves; *Conscious* of their own *Weakness*, and

Infirmity; and supported only with the *Hope* of God's *Grace*, to help them in time of need. And therefore St. *Paul*, upon this very ground, exhorted the *Philippians* to *work out their own Salvation with fear, and trembling*^a; because if they did so, then God would not fail to Bless them in it, and to *work in them both to Will, and to Do, of his good pleasure*^r.

²^{dly}. Such a *Fear*, as it will the best dispose us for the *Grace* of the *Holy Spirit* to help us in our Duty, and to fortify us against those Temptations that may chance to arise to draw us away from it; so will it the best dispose us for the *Pardon* of those *Sins*, which, when we have done all that we can, we shall still continue more or less to commit: Because he who thus *fears*, will either never *Willingly fall into any Sins*, and then there can be no doubt but that he shall find a ready Pardon of his *Involuntary Offences*; Or if he should be at any time so unhappy as to be led away by the *Deceitfulness of Sin*, yet this *Fear* will soon awaken him, and bring him both to a true Sense, and a deep Abhorrence, of it.

Here therefore, if ever, will be an Object fit for God's Mercy. An *Humble, Contrite, Penitent* Christian: A Man who in his heart truly loves God, and above all things both the most desires, and the most endeavours, to please Him: And is never so sensibly concern'd, as when he

^a Phil. ii. 12.

^r — 13.

does any thing that he thinks was contrary to his *Duty* to Him.

And having thus put a Man into a *State of Grace*, this *Fear*, 3^{dly}, to complete all, will be the surest means to enable Him to *persevere* in it unto the *End*: Whilst keeping him still under the same *concern* for his Salvation, and in the same *apprehensions* of *coming short* of it; it will by consequence keep him also in the same pious Care to live so that he may not miscarry at the last; and lose all the Benefit of his former Piety, for want of going on and continuing in it.

And now when so many Considerations engage us to the practice of this *Duty*; when the *Reward* proposed to us is so Great, and the *Danger* of missing it so Fatal; and one of the best means in the World to secure it to us, is to live always in a warm concern for it, and under a due apprehension of *coming short* of it: Methinks I could almost flatter my self that all this shall be sufficient to prevail with you thus to *fear*, lest any of you should be so unhappy as to fail of it.

Nor let any one think this an improper *Exhortation* for this place. *Fear* is, I confess, in general but a *Slavish Passion*, and such as I can easily believe the greatest part of this Assembly to be but little acquainted with. But yet there are some things which the *Philosophers* themselves could tell us the bravest Men both might, and ought to, be *afraid* of: And sure, if any

† Arist. Eth. Nicom. lib. iii. c. 6.

thing, the *Wrath of God*, and *Eternal Damnation*, may well be allow'd to fall under such a Character.

Never was there a *Prince* endued with a truer personal Courage than King *David*. I need not tell you through how many *Dangers* he passed, with how many *Difficulties* he encountred, and how *Great*, and *Intrepid*, he appeared in all his Tryals. And yet notwithstanding all his Bravery, this Great King thought it no reproach to Him to own such a *Fear* as this which I am now recommending to you, *Psal. cxix. 120. My flesh, says he, O God, trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgments.*

Where was there ever a Race of Men that despised, I do not say *Death*, but what is worse than *Death*, *Disgrace*, *Reproaches*, *Torments*, more than the *Primitive Martyrs*, and *Confessors*, of the *Christian Church* did? So terrible were their *Conflicts*, that it almost chills our blood to read the accounts of those *Cruelties* which they with an admirable Patience, and Constancy, underwent. The *Relations* of their *Sufferings* look more like *Romance* than *History*: They seem to describe not so much what any Men ever really underwent, as what the *Writers* of their *Lives* thought fit to invent, to magnify their *Courage*, and honour their *Religion*. And yet these are the Men who in their very *Sufferings* shew'd what a *Fear* they had of *offending God*, and *losing their own Souls*. It was their apprehension of this that inspired them with that Bravery we
fo

so much admire; and made them dare to suffer any Evils in this World, rather than run the hazard of Perishing for ever in the Other.

In short, our *Religion* which exhorts so much to *fear*, in this one Case, by this very *Fear* inspires us with the highest *Gallantry*, and *Resolution*, in all others: Whilst setting before us the hopes of a *Better State*, it teaches us not to value any Dangers, or Difficulties in *This*. It shews us how to be *Valiant* upon a Wise, and Rational Foundation: And whosoever follows the Dictates of it, He may indeed be more Temperate in the Use of his Courage, and place it upon better Objects, and reserve it for more worthy, and more justifiable Occasions, than Men are now-a-days wont to do; but he need never fear he should ever become the less a *Brave Man*, for being a *fearful*, and *obedient Christian*.

I shall conclude all with that Great *Precept* of *Christian Magnanimity*, Luke xii. 4. And which as it is a short Summary of all I have now been speaking, so may it, I think, be enough not only to *direct*, but to *try*, the Courage of the Stoutest among us:

Fear not them that kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do: But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear; Fear him which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into Hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him.

S E R M O N VI.

Preached before the

L O R D - M A Y O R, &c.

UPON THE

Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 26. 1691.

Psal. cxliv. 9, 10, 11.

*I will sing a new Song unto Thee O God;
upon a Psaltery and Instrument of Ten
Strings will I sing Praises unto Thee.*

*It is he that giveth Salvation to Kings, who
delivereth David his Servant from the
hurtful Sword.*

*Rid me, and deliver me from the Hand of
Strange Children; whose Mouth speaketh
Vanity, and their right hand is a right
hand of Falshood.*



Is but a very little while since we met
together in this Place, to implore the
favour of God in the Preservation of
their Majesties Persons, and for the
Good

Good Success of their *Arms* in those Great *Enterprizes* they were obliged to undertake, for the necessary *Defence* of our *Country*; the *Preservation* of our *Religion* and *Liberties*; and to put a quicker End to those unhappy *Confusions*, we have been so long, and dangerously, exposed to.

We are now Assembled with all possible *Thankfulness* to acknowledge his *Mercy*, in the Gracious *Return* which he has vouchsafed to make to these our *Requests*. That He has *Preserved* our *King*, and *Prosper'd* his *Enterprizes*; and given a Success to our *Arms*, if not equal to what perhaps *some* would have *wish'd*, yet I am sure beyond what *any* of *us* could *reasonably* have *expected*.

Now this being the Design of this *day's Solemnity*, I cannot tell how I could better entertain your *Devotion* than by offering you some Reflections upon the *Words* before us. In which we have the *Thanksgiving*, and *Prayer*, of a *King*: A *Gratulatory Acknowledgment* of God's *Mercy* to Him in his *past Deliverances*; and an earnest *Request* that He would still continue to deliver him both from the *Power*, and *Malice*, of his *false* and *treacherous Enemies*.

That this *Psalms* was composed by *King David*, the *Inscription* of it will not suffer us to doubt. And that he composed it upon the ac-

count of some great *Deliverance* which God had given him, from a *Personal danger*, as well as for some great *Victory* which he had obtain'd against his *Enemies*, the words of the *Text*, sufficiently demonstrate.

But now what that *Deliverance*, in particular, was, which he here acknowledges with so much *Gratitude*, and promises God He would ever celebrate with the most pious Resentments, and in the most solemn manner that He was able, we are no where told; nor is it perhaps an easy matter to determine any thing certainly concerning it.

Indeed were the *Title* which the *Septuagint* præfix to this *Psalms*, of such *Authority* that we might securely rely upon the Credit of it; we should then soon come to a Resolution of this Point. The *Danger* which the *Psalmist* here refers to, being ^b therein expressly said to have been that which he underwent when he encountered singly with *Goliath*, 1 *Sam.* xvii. and from whose Sword the ^c *Chaldee Paraphrast* on the *Text* tells us he here *blesse*s God for delivering of Him.

But as 'tis certain that this *Inscription* is not now to be found in any of the *Hebrew Copies* at this Day, so ^d *Theodoret* assures us that neither could He in his time meet with it in any. And

^b πρὸς τὸν Γολιάθ.

^d Tom. i. in Psal. 143.

מחרבא בישא רגלית.

the expressions of this *Psalm* both in the 2d, and 10th Verses, plainly shew that when he composed it he was not only *King of Israel*, but *thoroughly established in the Throne*. For so those Words must be understood *Psalm* 2. *Blessed be the Lord my strength, who teacheth my Hands to War, and my fingers to fight: My Goodness, and my Fortrefs, my High Tower, and my Deliverer, my shield, and He in whom I trust, who subdueth my People under me; i. e. Who after all the Contests that have been raised against me to oppose my Authority, has at last fully established me in the Throne, and brought All Israel to submit themselves unto Me.*

Now this has made Others suppose that the *Sword* ^e from which God had delivered David, and for which he here offers this *Eucharistical return* to Him, was the *Sword of Saul*, who so eagerly sought after his Life; and from whose hand he could never have escaped, had not the same *Providence* which before design'd him for the *Throne*, in a wonderful manner preserved him for it, and at last confirm'd him in it.

It cannot be denied but that this is a *Conjecture* agreeable enough to one part at least of the business of this *Psalm*, which was to *return Thanks to God* for putting an End to those *Oppositions* that had been raised against him by the

^e Compare this with *Psal.* xviii. 2, 47. 2 *Sam.* xxii. 3, 48.

^f See R. Kimchi in loc.

Friends of the House of Saul; and bringing all Israel to receive him as their King.

But tho' I shall not therefore exclude this from being a Part of what the *Psalmist* here intended to *Bless God* for, yet I cannot think that this comes up to the full meaning of the *Words* of the *Text*. For if we look more narrowly into the *Expressions* of it, we shall find good grounds to believe that *David* not only composed this *Psalm* after he was come to the *Crown*, but does more especially refer to some *Deliverance* which he had received after his *Coming* to it; and by consequence after all his *Dangers* from the *House of Saul* were at an End. For having first vow'd a *Thanksgiving* to God, *ψ. 9. I will sing a new Song unto thee O God: Upon a Psalter, and Instrument of ten strings, will I sing Praises unto thee.* He tells us *ψ. 10.* That the subject of his *Hymn* should be this, *It is he that giveth Salvation unto KINGS, that has deliver'd David his servant from the Hurtful Sword: i. e. as the Connexion plainly shews, when he was a King; and as such received Salvation from Him.*

In short, As the *Passage* I have now mentioned does I think plainly enough argue that this *Psalm* was a *Thanksgiving* for some *Deliverance* which God had vouchsafed to him after he was *King of Israel*; so we may reasonably conclude from the *Acknowledgment* which he makes in the *Beginning* of it, of his being at last *peace-*

ably settled in the Throne, as a Blessing which he had but newly received of Him, that it was a Deliverance from some Danger which befell him not long after his solemn Inauguration at Hebron, 2 Sam. v. And the Character which he gives us of his Enemies in two places of this Psalm^b, that They were Strange Children, whose mouth did speak Vanity, and their Right hand was a Right hand of falsehood, farther shews, that they were some of the Idolatrous Nations round about Him, that rose up against Him; and put him in that Hazard out of which God had, in a singular Manner, delivered Him.

Now this will lead us to a very probable Account of the Occasion, and Design, of the Psalm before Us. For in the second of Sam. v. 17. we read that no sooner had the Philistines heard that they had anointed David King over Israel, but they immediately Armed themselves against Him, in hopes that whilst He was yet scarce well settled in his Government they might be able to deal with Him; least if they tarried till mens Affections were wholly engaged to Him, He should then grow too Strong for them.

But God who had in so wonderful a manner brought him to the Throne, now no less miraculously preserved him in it. He went forth himself with him into the Battle to smite the Host of the Philistines; He directed Him both When,

^b ψ . 7, 8, 11. compare Deut. xxxii. 21, 2 Kings xvii. 15, Jer. ii. 5, &c.

ⁱ 2 Sam. v. 23, 24, 25.

and *How*, to fall upon Them. And having thus discomfited them in *two Battles*; and tho' not utterly destroy'd them, yet obtained a *considerable Advantage* against Them; the Royal Psalmist composed this *Psalm*, as a Solemn *Thanksgiving*, and *Prayer* to God Almighty; both to Bless him for that *Success* he had already obtain'd, and to implore his Favour for the utter *Subversion* of these his *Treacherous*, and *Idolatrous Enemies*.

I have before observed that this *Psalm* consists of *two principal Parts*; viz. 1st. A *Thanksgiving* for that great *Deliverance* which God had already given him out of the hands of the *Philistines*: And 2^{dly}. A *Prayer* for the Continuance of his *Favour* and *Protection*; that he would still go on to save him from his *Enemies*, and to bless his *Government* with *Peace* and *Prosperity*: And my *Text* leads Me to consider both of them;

Ist. The *THANKSGIVING*, *ψ. 9, 10. I will sing a new Song unto Thee O God! &c.*

II^{dly}. The *PRAAYER*, *ψ. 11. Rid me and deliver me from the hand of strange Children, whose Mouth talketh Vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falshood.*

I begin with the former of these;

I. The *Thanksgiving*, which David here made to God Almighty for preserving him from the

the *Sword* of his *Enemies*, and for the *Good Success* he had met with in his *Enterprizes* against Them.

It was a Part of that *Religion* which the ^k *Light* of *Nature* taught the very *Gentiles* themselves, as to *implore* the *help* of their *Gods* in times of *Danger* and *Distress*; so to make their *Solemn* returns of *Praise* and *Thanksgiving* to them, as often as they escaped with *Safety* out of it. The same *Reason* which forced them to acknowledge the *Being* of a *God* in the *Creation* of the *World*, carrying them on to confess the *Interest* he had in the *Government* of it: And that it was to his *Providence* therefore they ought both to *recommend* Themselves in All their *Affairs*, and to *render* the *Praise* of whatsoever *Success* they met with in them.

Hence we find so many ^l *Titles* given to them almost upon every *Occasion* of their *Saviours*, and *Deliverers*: So many ^m *Trophies* and *Monuments* set up to perpetuate the *Memory* of their

^k See Dionys. Hal. l. ii. p. 90. l. vi. p. 411.

^l Jupiter Feretrius Liv. Dec. l. l. i. Stator. ib. Imperator. l. 6. p. 75. G. Victor. l. 10. p. 121. Lactantius de F. R. p. 110. Tonans. Sueton. in Aug. n. 29. Conservator. Tacitus. Hist. l. 3. Custos. ib. Propugnator, &c.

Apollo. Sossianus, Medicus, &c. De Fortuna Cognominibus. Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Gen. D. l. i. c. 13. Hercules. Victor. Custos, &c. Ib. l. 2. c. 4.

^m Liv. Dec. l. l. 6. Suet. in Augusto n. 29. In Domitiano. n. 5. Dionys. Halic. l. 6. p. 411. Alex. ab Alex. l. i. c. 22. Plut. in Rom. n. 8, 9. Plin. N. H. l. 6. c. 28.

Blessings to Posterity: So many publickⁿ *Festivals* appointed, wherein to *commemorate* their *Favours*: So many^o *Shews*, and *Games*, and *Spectacles*, set forth in *Honour* of their *Benefactions*: And to come yet nearer to the *Business* of the *Text*, so many *Sacred*^p *Hymns* composed, to declare the *Greatness* of their *Love*, and *Kindness* to Mankind. The very^a *Triumphs* of their *Generals* were no less design'd in *Honour* of their *Gods*, than for the *Praise* and *Glory* of their *Commanders*; who esteem'd it a sufficient reward for all their *Dangers*, to go with *Pomp* and *Majesty* to their *Temples*; and there with the *publick Acclamations* of their *Country*, present the *Spoils* of their *Enemies* before them^r; and confess that it was by their *help* that they were return'd from the *Field* with *Safety* and *Success*. From all which no other *Conclusion* can be drawn than this; That as they were sensible their *Help* came to them from *above*, so they thought it their *Duty* by all possible means to express their *Grateful Resentments* of it.

ⁿ Themist. Or. xiii. p. 305. Ed. 4^{to}. Dionys. Halic. l. 2. p. 90. Ib. p. 130. l. 3. p. 173. l. 6. ad finem. Virg. Æn. l. 8. v. 172, 188, 189, &c. 268, &c.

^o Liv. Dec. l. 1. 3. p. 63. H. Vid. Dionys. Hal. loc. citatis Tacit. Ann. l. 14. c. 21. Liv. Dec. l. 1. 1. p. 9. D. Suet. in Aug. c. 18. Vid. Alex. ab Alex. l. 5. c. 8. & l. 6. c. 19.

^p Dionys. Hal. l. 2. p. 102. & p. 130. Plut. in Rom. n. 8.

See Orph. Hymn. Callim. in laud. Apoll. Virg. Æn. l. 8. v. 287, &c. 303.

^a See Rosinus Antiq. Rom. lib. 10. cap. 28, 29. Dionys. Hal. lib. 2. p. 102. Alex. ab Alex. l. 6. c. 6. Plin. H. Nat. l. 15. c. 30. Seneca l. de Consol. c. 10. Plin. Panegy. c. 8.

^r See Rosinus Ant. R. l. 10. c. 29.

And

And indeed if to be *Insensible* of the *Favours* which one of our *Fellow-Creatures* bestows upon us, has ever been esteem'd enough to fix one of the *blackest Imputations*, (for so we all of us account that of *Ingratitude* to be) upon such a One: How much more both *Wicked*, and *Ungrateful*, must he be judged who neglects his God; and takes no notice of those *Blessings* which his bountiful *Providence* showers down upon Him?

But there is yet much more to be consider'd by Us as to this Matter: For not only our *Piety* towards God, and that *grateful Sense* we ought to have of his *Mercies* to us, oblige us thus to *return* our *Thanks* for them; but our very *Interest* too concurs to engage us to it.

He who neglects to *acknowledge* the *Kindness* of One of his *Fellow-Creatures*, and thereby forfeits all Pretence to any *farther Favours* from Him; runs only the Hazard of being *deprived* of that *little Help* which such a One might otherwise have afforded Him some other Time, and of which perhaps He may never find any great Want. To be sure the most we can suppose he could hazard by it, would be to become thereby exposed to the *Resentments* of a *Man* whom he needs not much fear, and against whom he may find out many ways to defend Himself.

But it is not so with relation to *God-Almighty*: His *Providence* is always over us, and we cannot *subsist* the least *Moment* of our *Lives* without

out it. *In him we live, and move, and have our Being*^s. The very *Breath* that we draw in, the *World* in which we dwell, Our *Health* and *Strength*, Our *Food* and *Raiment*^t; In a word, Our *Lives*, and all the *Comforts* of them, are All of them the Effects of his *continued Bounty* to us. And should we by our *Ingratitude* provoke Him to withdraw His Favour from us, we should then become *Destitute* indeed; for ever lost to all the *Hopes* both of *this World* and of the *Other*.

Now the *only Acknowledgment* we can make to God for all his *Mercies* to us, is this of *Praise* and *Thanksgiving*. He is above receiving any Other Returns from Us. Whatsoever we have besides, it is all of his *Bounty* to us, nor can he be *profited* by it^u. And sure when God bestows so many *Blessings* upon Us, and expects only this little *Tribute* to be paid for them, that we should *own* them to be his *Gift*, and *celebrate* his *Mercy* for the *Giving* of them: We must needs be very inexcusable indeed, if we neglect to return this to Him; and more insensible than the very *Gentiles* themselves; who, as we have before observed, never fail'd in the most solemn manner they were able, so to do.

Such then was the *Justice*, and Reasonableness, of that *Acknowledgment* which the *Royal Psalmist* here engaged himself to make to God Al-

^s Acts xvii. 28.

^t Psal. civ. 28, 29, 30.

^u Psal. l. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. Psal. cxvi. 12, 13, 17.

^w Chron. x. 9. Dan. iv. 34, 37. Jonasi. 16, &c.

mighty,

mighty, for delivering Him out of those *imminent Dangers* to which He had been exposed. *I will sing a New-song unto Thee O God! upon a Psaltery, and Instrument of ten strings, will I sing Praises unto Thee.* And it is supposed by some that the very next *Psalm* to this, was that *Hymn* which he composed in pursuance of this *Vow*: In which with all the *height of Poetry*, and in the most *exquisite Form* that *Art and Piety* joyn'd together and assisting one another, could produce; He sets forth the *glorious Goodness of God*, to the whole *World*, but especially to *Mankind*; and among them more particularly to such as duly *serve* him, and put their *Trust and Confidence* in his *Mercy*. And in conformity to whose *Example* it will behove every One of us this *day* to lift up our *Hearts to Heaven* in *Songs of Praise* to that *God*, who has now again in our *Case*, as He did heretofore in *David's*, in so extraordinary a manner made good the *Character* of the *Text* to us; *It is He that giveth Salvation unto Kings, that hath delivered David his Servant from the hurtful Sword.*

But of our own concern in this *Duty*, I shall take *Occasion* to speak more particularly hereafter: In the mean time having thus briefly consider'd in the *general*, what those *grounds* were upon which the *Holy Psalmist* took up the *Resolution* you have seen in the *Words of the Text*, *I will sing a New-song unto Thee O God*; Let us for our further *Direction* in the *Duty* before Us, enquire more expressly, What the *Subject* of his

O

Praise

Praise was, and what *Ours* ought at this Time to be.

Now this He tells Us in the next *Verse*; viz. that it should consist in a *grateful Acknowledgment* of God's *particular Providence*,

(1st.) Over ^x All *Kings*, and *Princes* whatsoever, more than over other *Men*: *It is He that giveth Salvation unto Kings.*

(2^{dly}.) Among Them in a more especial manner over *Himself*, more than any other *King* besides: *It is he that giveth Salvation unto Kings; and delivereth David his Servant from the hurtful Sword.*

And (1st.) That we ought to *bleſs God* for that *particular Providence* he is pleased to exercise over *Kings*, and *Princes*, beyond what he usually does over other *Ordinary Persons*^y.

For let not the greatest *Monarchs* mistake themselves, as if it were their own *Power*, or *Conduct*, that secured them against those many, and imminent *Dangers*, to which their very *Place* and *Station* continually expose them: But rather let them consider, ^z What would all their *Guards* and their *Attendants*, all their mighty *Power* and *Forces*, avail Them, were there not a supe-

^x See R. Kimchi in loc.

^y See Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. ii. ad fin. *Qua ratio Poëtas, maximeque Homerum impulit, ut principibus Heroum—certos Deos discriminum & periculorum comites adjungeret.* Vid. pl.

^z Οὐ γὰρ σωτόπεδα ἰδὲ σωματοφύλακες, ἀλλ' ἡ ὁ Θεὸς ἰσχυρὸς ὢν. Heracl. in γ. 10. Huj. Psal. Et Supr. in γ. 1. Vid. Caten. Gr. ib. in γ. 2.

riour *Eye* of *Providence* continually watching over them, to *protect* and *preserve* them?

That a *whole Nation* should stand in awe of *one single Person*, whom they all know to be but a *Man* like unto themselves; That they should *obey* his *Commands*, and *tremble* at his *Justice*: That those who oftentimes *despise* their *own Lives*, should yet not *dare* to *strike* at His; but *startle* at the very *Thought* of doing him a *Mischief*: 'Tis not their own *Wisdom*, or *Power*, or *Resolution*; 'tis not the *Name*, or *Ensigns* of *Majesty*, that can be thought sufficient to work such a *Restraint*. It is the *Providence* of that *God* by whom *Kings reign*, and *Princes decree Justice*^a, that alone is able to give such a *Reverence*, and *Security* to them. He has set his *Stamp* of *Majesty* upon them; He has declared them to be his *Ministers*^b: and this forces even the most *Violent Men* to have such a *regard* for them, as nothing but this could ever engage them to.

And this I say ought at *All times*, but especially on such *Solemn Occasions* as these, to be esteem'd a Matter of especial *Praise* and *Thanksgiving* to *God* for it.

For were it not for such a *Restraint* as that we have now been speaking of, What would become of all the *Peace*, and *Order*, and *Government* of the *World*? *Kings* might enact *Laws*; they might settle our *Liberty*, and *Property*, at

^a Prov. viii. 15.

^b Rom. xiii. 1, 2, 5.

^c Hierocles de Prov. p. 18.

Home, and enter into *Leagues of Peace*, and *Commerce*, Abroad: But alas! What precarious things would All these be, were they left open by God to the *Violence* and *Fury* of every bold *Invader*; and no longer to be of any force, than till some *desperate*, and *turbulent*, Spirits should be found to run all things into *Disorder* and *Confusion*?

But Blessed be God! who has not given Us up to the *wild Passions*, and *ungovern'd Appetites*, of *Wicked* and *Violent Men*. But as he has laid the strongest *Obligations* upon Us to be *subject* to the *higher Powers* not only for *Wrath*, but also for *Conscience sake*^d; to *obey* their *Laws*, and *support* their *Government*; to *bear* with their *Infirmities*, and, if *Occasion* be, even *Suffer* too rather than dare to *resist* their *Authority*: So has he *impress'd* on our *Minds* a certain *Awe* of that *Power* which he has put into their hands, that will not permit us, no not in our very *Hearts*, to *despise*, or *disregard* them; and by *frequent Instances* of his *Vengeance*, has effectually assured us, that there is a *singular Eye* of *Providence* that overlooks them, and that no *One* shall *lift up his hand against them* and go unpunish'd^e.

This, as it is the great *Security* of all the *Peace*, and *Quiet*; of all the *Happiness*, and *Prosperity*, which we *Enjoy*; so ought we upon *all Occasions* to be ready to declare our Sense

^d Rom. xiii. 1, 5.

^e 1 Sam. xxvi. 9.

of it, by our *grateful Acknowledgments* to God for it. But the *Royal Psalmist* had a yet more particular *Subject* for his *Praise* than this: For

(2^{dly}.) This God who has such a *near*, and *tender regard*, for All *Kings* and *Princes* whatsoever, above *Other Men*; did in a *Singular Manner* shew his *Concern* for *Him*, more than for any *Other Prince* that then lived in the *World*.

If we consider *Him* before his *coming* to the *Throne*; From how many *Dangers* did it even *then* please God to *save* and *deliver* *Him*? Let the *Hazards* which he run with the *Lion*, and the *Bear*^f; His *Encounters* with *Goliath* first, and then with whole^g *Armies* of the *Philistines*: His *narrow escape* from the^h *Javelin* of *Saul*; and his yet more *narrow escape* from the *Hands* of thoseⁱ *Murderers* whom he sent on purpose to *slay* him: Let the *Perils* he underwent when^k *Saul* with his *Army* hunted him up and down from place to place; forced *Him* to flee sometimes into the *Wilderness*, among the *Wild Beasts* for *Refuge*; at other times into the *Enemies Country*, to those very^l *Philistines* whom he had so much enraged by his frequent *encounters* against them; not to mention any more *Particulars*, declare to us.

Nor were those he underwent, 2^{dly}, after he came to the^m *Throne* any less remarkable: Whilst

^f 1 Sam. xvii. 34, 51.

^g Ib. Ch. xviii, xix, &c.

^h Ib. xviii. 11.

ⁱ Ib. xix. 20.

^k Ib. xxii, xxiii, xxiv, &c.

^l Ib. xxvii, xxviii.

^m 2 Sam. ii, iii, iv.

the *Kingdom* was yet divided against Him, and but *one* of all the *Tribes* of *Israel* stuck firm to Him, and own'd his *Authority* for above Seven years. And when at last it pleased God to unite the *whole People* under him; no sooner was He free from those *Civil Disturbances* at Home, but a *Foreign* ° *Enemy* forthwith invaded him from *Abroad*, and again expos'd him to *New Dangers*.

But out of all these *Difficulties* God deliver'd him; and were it necessary for me to go on to the *following parts* of his *Life*, we may find yet greater *Instances* than these of his wonderful *Preservations* of him. And as 'tis certain that no One ever took more care to *magnify* the *Mercies* [of God, than *David* did; so I may say that never had any *Prince* greater reason than He had to do it: Who seems to have been *chosen* by God out of all the *Kings* of the World, to shew what a tender regard the *Almighty* has to his own *Ministers*, whilst they take care to *live well*, and to *demean* themselves as becomes that *Place*, and *Character*, which he has bestow'd upon Them.

This then was the *Case* of the *Royal Psalmist*, when he resolv'd upon that *Song of Eucharist*, of which the *Text* speaks, in acknowledgment of all those *Blessings* which God had vouchsafed to Him. And if we enquire into the *Reason* of all this; What it was that moved God

to shew such a particular regard to this *Great Man*; I think we may give these two Accounts of it.

1st. That He was *King* of Gods own *peculiar* People; that *People* which he had chosen out of all the Inhabitants of the Earth to be his *own Inheritance*. To whom alone of all the *Nations* of the *World* he had *declared* his *Will*, and given many *noble Discoveries* of himself; whilst the rest of Mankind lay in a miserable state of *Darkness* and *Idolatry*: And of whom therefore he took a *singular Care*, more than of any *Other People* or *Country* besides.

Now if God had an *especial regard* to the *Jewish Nation* more than to *any Other*¹; If he kept as it were his *peculiar Residence* among them, and maintain'd a more than ordinary *Communication* in all other respects with them: It ought not to be wonder'd, If we find him in a singular manner *watching* over their *Kings* more than over those of any *Other People* or *Nation*, besides; and in an extraordinary manner careful to *save*, and *defend* Them.

But this is not yet all: For if we look into the *History* of the *Holy David*, we shall find that God did not only favour Him more than any *King* of all the *Nations* round about him, but more than any other *King* of *Israel* its self. And therefore I add

¹ Psal. cxxxv. 4. Deut. iv. 7, 8, 32, &c. 2 Sam. vii. 23.

² Exod. xxv. 8. Jer. vii. 12. Ezek. xxxvii. 26.

2^{dly}. That this Great Man was not only *King* of God's own peculiar People, and as such the *Guardian* of his *Laws*, and *Supporter* of his *Worship*: But he was moreover Himself a most excellent Person; a Man after God's own Heart^r; and by his own *Piety*, no less than by his *place*, and *Character*, in a more particular manner intituled to the *Divine Care*, and *Protection*.

And this is what I take to be implied in that *Expression* of the *Text* where He calls himself *God's Servant*, *It is He that giveth Salvation unto Kings, who delivereth David his Servant from the Hurtful Sword*.^s Intimating to us, that it was this *Relation* in which he stood to God above all other *Kings*, and indeed almost beyond all Other *Men* that ever lived in the world, of being *Zealous* and *Faithful* in his *Service*, that engaged his *Providence* to such an *extraordinary Concern* for Him.

And if we look into all the following *Reigns*, we shall find that according as any of his *Successors* shew'd themselves either^r careful for God's *Service*, or^v negligent of it; accordingly God

^r 1 Sam. xiii. 14. Psal. v. 12. xxxiv. 15, 17. xxxvii. 17, &c.

^s 1 Chron. x. 13, 14. 2 Sam. vii. 8. 1b. xxii. 21, to 25.

^r 1 Kings xv. 4. 2 Kings x. 30. 2 Chron. xv, xvii. 5. xx. 37. xxvi. 5. xxvii. 6. ^v 1 Sam. ii. 30. 1 Kings xi. 11, 31, 33. xiv. 9, 10. xv. 29. xvi. 12, 13, 19. xvii. 18. xxi. 10. 2 Chron. xii. 5, 6, &c. xxv. 14, 15.

appear'd to be more or less careful to *prosper* and *protect* them.

Whilst * *Solomon* continu'd to walk in the Steps of his *Father David*, never was any *Prince* more *Great*, or *Honourable*, than He was. But when * *Peace* and *Plenty*, His *Wives* and his *Pleasures*, corrupted his *Religion*, and made him *bait* between *God* and *Baal*, the *Temple* and the *Groves*; tho' for his *Father's David's* sake *God* would not *rend the Kingdom* from Him in his own time, yet He *threatned* to *deprive* his *Son* of it; and rais'd up many *Dangers* and *Troubles* against him, to disturb his *Peace*, and to diminish his *Glory*.

On the other side we are told of *Hezekiah*, 2 Kings xviii. 5. *That after Him was none like Him of all the Kings of Judah, nor any that were before Him. For he clave to the LORD, and departed not from following Him, but kept his Commandments which the LORD commanded Moses.* And what the *Consequence* of his *Piety* was, we read in the very next *Verse*; *And the LORD was with Him, and he prospered whithersoever he went forth.*

It were an easy matter to add many more *Examples* in proof of this Remark, were it at all necessary to insist upon it. The *Summ* of all is this; That as *God* does in a particular *Manner* exercise his *Providence* in the *Preservation* of *Kings* and *Princes*, above other *Men*; so among

w See 1 Kings x.

* xi. 4.

y — 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 23, 26.
them

them he is yet more especially careful to prosper and protect Those who profess his true Religion; and take care both to Live themselves, and, as far as they are able, to engage their People to live according to the Rules of it.

Indeed there are certain Seasons when God suffers the Best^z Princes not only to fall into some lesser Dangers, but it may be utterly to be cut off by Wicked and Violent Hands. When the Sins of a Nation are come to their full period, so that all the Piety and Prudence of their Governours^a are neither able to reclaim them from their Evil ways, nor to intercede with God for a longer Forbearance of them.

Such was the case of the^b Jews in the time of King Josiah; a better Prince than whom never sat upon the Throne of David. Yet God suffer'd him to fall by the hand of^c Pharaoh-Necho King of Egypt, that so he might not survive the^d Fortunes of his Country, nor see the Evil which was then just ready to break in upon it. And when Schism and Faction, when Base Designs and Open Immoralities, had in like manner prepared Us of this Country for some great Destruction: We know how it pleased God from small Beginnings, and unforeseen Accidents, to throw us into a miserable State of War and Confusion; and to deprive us at once both of an

^z Hosea x. 3. xiii. 11.

xxii. 16, 17. xxiii. 26.

^d 2 Kings xxii. 18, 19, 20.

^a 2 Kings xxiii. 26.

^c 2 Chron. xxxv. 20, &c.

^b Ib.

excellent *Prince*, and with him of our *Church*, and *Monarchy* too.

But then even this God appoints in ^e *Mercy* to them, when it would really be more Grievous to them to *Live* than to *Die*: And the Misfortune generally is not so much theirs, as the *Countries*, or *Nations*, from which they are taken.

And so on the Other hand, There is a time when the *Worst* ^f *Princes* are strangely preserved; tho' yet even then we may observe that for the most part they *perish* miserably in the *End*: When God raises them up to be the *Scourge* and *Plague* of a *wicked World*; and makes use of them, as he did sometimes of the *Kings* of *Egypt* and *Babylon* heretofore, to punish the *People* and *Kingdoms* round about Them.

But otherwise, I believe it will generally be found true, that the more careful any *King*, or *Prince*, is to *live well*, and *govern justly*, and do what in him lies to *propagate* a true Sense of *Piety* among his *People*, the Happier he proves; and is the more *eminently preserved* by God, as he is certainly the more *dearly Beloved* by Him.

And good Reason there is why God should observe this Method with them; For

[1st.] This, if any thing, will lay the *strongest Obligations* upon such *Persons* to be very careful to support the *Honour* of God, and the *Credit* of *Religion*: When once they shall perceive that their *Welfare* in this *present World*, as well as

^e *Isai.* lvii. 1. 2 *Kings* xxii. 18, &c.
^g *Ib.* xxv. 9. xliii. 10. *Ezek.* xxvi. 7.

^f *Jer.* xxv. 12. l. 18.

their *final Happiness* in the *Other*, depends upon it.

And I need not tell you what a mighty *Advantage* this must needs bring to *Virtue*, and *Piety*; to find not only a *Refuge* in the *Courts* of *Princes*^h, but a *Respect*, and *Encouragement*: And be countenanced by those whose very *Examples* are *Influential*; and will contribute more to the promoting a *Sense* of *Religion* in the *World*, than all the *Motives* or *Arguments* that we can urge, will ever be able to do without it.

[2^{dly}.] Such a Procedure as this gives a great Justification to the *ways* of *Providence*, in the management of *Affairs* here below. It shews that *there is a God who judgeth in the Earth*ⁱ: That he does not look on as an unconcern'd *Speculator* of the *Affairs* of *Men*; but when he sees occasion, both can, and does interpose, and *reward*, or *punish*, the greatest Persons, according to their *Works*.

The ^k*Fortunes* of *Princes* as they are placed in a much *Higher Sphere* than those of *Other Men*, so are they by consequence more *Conspicuous* too; and lie open a great deal more to *publick Observation*. And when once it shall be remark'd that they *flourish* or *decay*, are either *Exalted* or *Cast down*, according as they *live*, or *not*, in the *Exercise* of *Piety*: This will effe-

^h Themist. Orat. xvii. p. 462. Ed. Paris. 4^{to}. ⁱ Psal. lviii. 11.

^k *Habet hoc primum magna Fortuna, quod nihil tectum, nihil occultum esse patitur.* Plin. Paneg. c. 83.

Actually silence all the *Cavils* of the most perverse *Sceptick* in his *Disputes* against *Providence*; and force him whether he will or no to confess, that *Verily there is a reward for the Righteous, doubtless there is a God* who observes whatsoever is done by us, and will not suffer the *Wicked* always to go unpunish'd.

Again, [3^{dly}.] It is commonly alledged, and I think very truly too, that *Kingdoms*, and *Nations*, are therefore either rewarded, or punish'd, in this *World*, because they shall not as such be judg'd in the *Other*. And the same may be said of their *Rulers* also: When the Greatest *Monarch* goes down into the *Grave*, all his *Pomp*, and *Power*; his *Titles*, and *Majesty*, perish together with him; and he shall stand in *Judgment* in the same undistinguish'd Rank with the meanest of his *Subjects*.

Whatsoever *Reward* therefore God shall please to give to such an One as a *King*, it must be in this *present Life*. And tho' I will not deny, but that those who employ their *Power* and *Authority*, which God has committed to them, to the *Ends* of *Virtue* and *Religion*; to promote the *Peace* and *Welfare* of their *Country*, and as far as they can, to procure the *Happiness* of all the *Nations* round about them; both may expect a *super-abundant reward* for it, and I doubt not shall receive a more than ordinary *Retribution* in the *Other World*: Yet I cannot but think that such *Princes* as these may justly hope for some anticipation of their future *Recompence* in this.

And

And since to their *private Piety* as they are *Men*, they add a *publick Concern* for the *Glory of God*, and the *Good of the World*, as they are *Princes*: Tho' I dare not say that God in *Justice* ought, yet I think I may affirm that 'tis not without good reason that he does vouchsafe in a singular manner to watch over them, as a *common Blessing to Mankind*; and prosper their Endeavours in what tends so much to the *noblest Ends* of his *Providence*; to his own *Honour*, to the *Interest*, and *Reputation* of his *Religion*; and in one word, to the *publick Advantage* both of mens *Peace*, and *Tranquillity* in this *Life*, and of their *Everlasting Happiness*, and *Salvation*, in the *Other*.

And this may suffice for the *first thing* I proposed to speak to, Of the *General Obligation* which lay upon the *Royal Psalmist* thus to *praise God*; and of the *particular manner* wherein he engaged to do it. I shall add but very little as to the *Other Consideration*,

II^{dly}. Of the *Prayer* with which he *closed up* his *Thanksgiving*: *Save me, and deliver Me from the hand of strange Children, whose Mouth speaketh Vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.*

I have before observed, that the *Enemies against Whom David* here *prays*; and whom he brands with the *Ignominious Character*, of a *Vain, Idolatrous, and Perfidious People*, were
the

the *Philistines*, who declared War against him, immediately upon his being *Anointed King* in *Hebron*. Now tho' by the Blessing of God he had already obtain'd two considerable *Victories* over them, whereby he was for the present at ease from them: Yet he knew^m, that by the assistance which the *Neighbouring Countries* were all ready to lend to them, they would again be in a Condition in a little while to make Head against him; and he doubted not but that as soon as ever they were able, they would be *Treacherous* enough to do it.

It was upon this *apprehension*, that having first given *Thanks* to God for his present *Deliverance*, he in the next place subjoyn'd his earnest *Request* to him, that he would in like manner *preserve* him from their *Attempts* for the time to come. And how necessary such a *Prayer* was, the event shew'd. For it was not very long before he was again engaged with them: And then God remembred his ⁿ *Prayer*, and not only *delivered* him out of their hands; but strengthen'd him in such a manner, that after many encounters, He utterly disabled them from giving any farther trouble to Him.

But I insist too long upon the Consideration of these *Words* as they lie before me in this *Psalms*: And the *Solemnity* of this *Day* calls me off to

^l 2 Sam. v. 17.

^m See Jos. Ant. l. vii. cap. 4.

ⁿ 2 Sam. viii. 1, &c. xxi. 15, &c. Compare with xxii. 1. See Joseph. Ant. lib. vii. cap. 10. Μετὰ δὲ τούτω τῷ μάχῃ ἐκ ἔτι τοῖς Ἰσραηλῖταις ἐπολέμησαν.

another *Application* of them. And tho' I doubt not but you have in a good measure prevented Me in your *Reflections* upon the foregoing *Parts* of this *Discourse*; yet I cannot conclude without pointing out to you somewhat more plainly, how great an Interest we have in the *Subject* of it.

And 1st. As to what concerns the *Eucharistical part* of the *Text*, never had any *People* greater reason to joyn with *Holy David* in his *Thanksgiving to God*, than *We* of this *Nation*, at this *Time*, have.

For indeed, when did God ever more eminently shew himself to be the *Saviour of Kings*, than in those frequent, and signal *Deliverances*, which he has afforded to our own *Royal Sovereign* from the *Hurtful Sword*?

If (1st.) We consider his *Personal Deliverances*; I may venture to affirm, That never did any *Prince* more generously expose himself for any *People*, than his *Majesty* in these late Years has done for Us; nor I think did any ever more narrowly escape with Safety out of them.

For not to say any thing of the *Common Hazards of War*; tho' perhaps no *Prince* either undertook more *Expeditions*, or carried them on with greater *Diligence*, or appear'd in them with more *Courage*; or ended them with better *Success*; or less consider'd His own *Safety*, in comparison of the *publick Good*, than our *Royal Master* has done, since the time of Him of whom our *Text* speaks: I can scarce yet without Astonishment

nishment remember, How near the *fatal*° *Blow* came to him, which had not the watchful *Providence* of God, for sure nothing else could have done it, prevented, must for ever have *quench'd* the *Light* of our *Israel*^p; and have at once put a *final Period* to his *Life*, and in that to all our *Hopes*. But that God who raised him up to *assert* his *Cause*, and to vindicate the *Liberty* not of this *Country* only, but of all *Europe*, from the *Rage* and *Power* of its *Common Enemy* and *Oppressor*; had yet more *Victories* for him to obtain: And therefore he *heard* our *Prayers*, and *cover'd* his *Head* in that *Day of Battle*; and sent him back to us with so much the *Greater Joy*, by how much the nearer we were to have been *utterly deprived* of *Him*.

But that which ought yet more to be considered by Us, and to raise up our Souls to a still greater height of *Thanksgiving* for this *Deliverance* is; that as his *Danger* was *Imminent*, so was it of such a *Nature* that nothing but the same *God* who preserved *David* heretofore from the *Hurtful Sword*, could have delivered our *King* from the *Stroke* of it.

Here was no room for *Counsel* or *Advice*; No opportunity for any *Humane Means* to have interposed for his *Preservation*. Neither the *Courage* of his *Bravest*, nor the *Conduct* of his *Wiseſt Servants*, could have stood him in any stead. No; it was that *God* who did *Deliver* him, that

° At the Boyne in Ireland.

P 2 Sam, xxi. 17.

alone was capable of doing it: *And therefore not unto Us, O Lord, but unto thy Name be the Glory of it*⁹.

And these are such *Circumstances* as would at *any time* have engaged us to a *lively Sense* of so great a *Deliverance*: But at such a *time* as that was, in which God was pleased thus wonderfully to *preserve* him, to restore him again to us; this is what gives a singular addition to the *Blessing* of it.

For a *Nation* to be *deprived* of a *Good Prince*, a *King* endued with all those *Royal Virtues*, which the very *Enemies* of our *Sovereign* cannot deny to be most *Conspicuous* in Him; must certainly at any time have been a very great *Calamity*, and what would have call'd for the *Lamentations* of all that truly valued either the *Honour*, or *Welfare*, of their *Country*.

But to have been *deprived* of such a *Prince* in a time of *Trouble* and *Difficulty*; when nothing but his *Conduct*, his *Courage* and *Reputation*, could possibly have prevented Us from an utter *Ruin* and *Confusion*: I want words to express how *Fatal* the *Consequence* must have been to Us.

And yet this, or rather, if possible, somewhat beyond all this, was our *Case*, when *God* sent us this great *Deliverance*.

Our *Enemies* defied us from *Abroad*; They *threatned* us even there where we thought our

⁹ Psal. cxv. 1.

selves the most *Secure* against Them: Where we were wont till now to give *Laws*, and strike Terror into all other *Nations* besides. And had they obtain'd this farther *Advantage* against us; What could have hindred but that our very *Name*, and *Nation*; our *Liberties*, and *Religion*, must for ever have been buried in *Reproach*, and *Desolation*?

Nor was the *Insolence* of *Those* within any less: They began already to devour us again in their *Hopes*; and expected only when the *happy Minute* should come, that would again have put them in a Condition to have *accomplish'd* their *wicked Designs* against us.

Thus did all things seem manifestly to threaten us with *Ruin* and *Confusion*. Nothing now remain'd but the *Dread* of our absent *Prince*; and whom, tho' at the greatest *Distance*, they cannot but *tremble* at, to rescue us from these *Dangers*. And we may truly say, it was the *Reputation* of his *Name*, and the *Apprehension* of his *Conduct*, that then kept us in *Peace* and *Quiet*, when We justly fear'd that all was running into *War* and *Tumults*. And had the *Providence* of *God* then fail'd him; had not the *Almighty* in a most wonderful manner *preserved* Him; and given him a more than ordinary *Success* in his *Undertakings*; We should now have been perhaps One of the most *Miserable*, to be sure one of the most *Slavish* and *Contemptible Nations* in the World.

I should much exceed the *Bounds* of such a *Discourse* as this, should I go on particularly to recount to you what mighty *Deliverances* God has again vouchsafed to Him, since that of which I have been hitherto speaking. To what *Dangers* he has been exposed in an *Element* that of all Others hath been the most *Contrary* to Him? What new *Hazards* he has again encountred in the *Field*? And all this for our sakes, to promote our *Welfare*, and, if it be possible, secure it to all *succeeding Generations*.

Blessed be God! Who has again brought Him back to Us in *Health* and *Safety*; and Crown'd him yet once more with *Honour* and *Victory*. That has turn'd those *Dangers* we before lay under, into some *Hopes*, that I do not say into a fair Prospect, of *Peace* and *Security*. That has restor'd our *Country* its *King*, our *Church* its *Defender*, and all of us our *publick Welfare* and *Security*. And who, if We be not our selves wanting to his *Desires*, shall by the Blessing of the same God not only *save* us from *Ruin*, but repair our *Credit*, and revive that *Spirit* amongst us which enabled our *Ancestors* so gloriously to *Triumph* over their *Enemies* heretofore: And shew that it is not in vain We either *bear* the *Arms* of *France*, or pretend a *Right* and *Title* to it. That our *Nation* is still the same it ever was, and has only wanted a *Prince* to lead it on. And having now at last met with such a One, who can tell but we may yet see that *Proud Monarch* shewn to be no longer

longer *Invincible*? But that a *King* of *England*, supported by the *Favour* of *God*, the *Justice* of his *Cause*, and the *Courage* and *Affections* of his *People*, is still able to give a *Check* to his *Carrier*: And deliver *Europe* from the *Insolence* of a *Power* which it had never fear'd, had not the *Pacifick Temper* of our late *Princes*, and even the *Help* of our *Arms*, unhappily raised it to too *Great a height*, either for the *Common Peace*, or our own *Security*.

Which brings me to the Consideration of that *Other sort of Deliverances* which *God* has vouchsafed to our *King*, as he did to *David* heretofore, *viz.*

2^{dly}. From the *Force* and *Power* of his *Enemies*.

And this again carries me into a new *Field of Discourse*, and ministers another *large*, and *noble*, *Subject* to us of *Praise* and *Thanksgiving*.

It is but a little while since we seem'd to have been a *Nation* mark'd out by *Heaven* for *Ruin* and *Destruction*. ^rOur *Religion*, and *Liberties*, were begun to be both equally *trampled* under foot. Our *Laws* were *over-ruled*, and become no longer of any *Use* to us: The very *Legislative Power* its self, ^scontrived by our *Ancestors* in such a manner as to be the *Great Security* of the *Subject*, and *Barrier* against the *Ar-*

^r See the Declaration of the Lords and Commons, Feb. 13. 1688.

^s See Knyghton, p. 2681. King Charles I. Answer to the xix Propositions.

bitrary, and Unbounded Power of the Prince; by Secret Practices, and unwarrantable Attempts, endeavour'd to be turn'd against us, and made the very Means of running us into Slavery.

In the midst of this Distress, God rais'd up a mighty and unexpected *Salvation* for us. A *Prince* not less *injured*, but much more *able* to assert his *Rights*, and *exact* a *Satisfaction*, than *We* were. And God prosper'd his *Enterprize* in such a manner, as I believe is not to *parallell'd* in *Story*, nor will *Posterity* perhaps believe it. That there should be a *Conquest* without a *Battle*: A *Kingdom* peaceably *Deliver'd* up by a *Prince* to his *greatest Enemy*; who had at the same time to all Appearance a better *Force* actually in the *Field* to defend it, than the Other had to drive him out of it.

But what can be done, when God *infatuates* Mens *Counsels*, and strikes a *Terror* upon their *Hearts*; that will not suffer them *bravely* to defend, what they had *vainly undertaken*? And tho' *Subjects* for *Conscience* sake may *submit* to the most *unjust Usurpations*, and not *dare* by *Force* to *Right* themselves: Yet I think few have ever been so delicate in their *Obedience*, as to esteem themselves under any *Obligation* to fight themselves into *Slavery*; and contend for

* See King *James's* Letter to the Earl of *Feversham* about disbanding the Army, with the Earl's Letter thereupon to the Prince of *Orange*.

their *Chains*, with these who would set them at *Liberty* from them.

Thus did God begin to save us from our *Enemies*, and from the *Hands* of those that hate us^v; Or rather in the words of the *Text*, from the hands of strange Children; whose Mouth speaketh *Vanity*, and their right hand is a right hand of *Falshood*. But we have yet more than this to fill up our *Hymns* of *Praise* and *Thanksgiving*. God has not only saved Us from this *Danger* within, but has preserved us from that which was the natural *Consequence* of it, the *Fury* of *War* Abroad: And given such a *Success* to our *Arms*, as I am persuaded the most *Sanguine* amongst us, could hardly have flattered Himself withall.

When was it ever heard before, that a little weak *Town*, and a few *undisciplined Men*, baffled all the Attacks of a numerous *Army*, provided with all things necessary for the reducing of it: And at last forced them, after a *Seige* of *Fifteen Weeks*, to quit their Attempt as *Vain* and *Unpracticable*?

That a whole *Kingdom*, fenced by *Nature* to a degree of being almost *impregnable*; supported by Men every way engaged both by *Interest* and *Religion*, by all their *Hopes* of this *World* and the *Other*, to do their utmost to *Defend* it; assisted by a powerful *Force* from *Abroad*, and to all this, animated with a *Spirit* of *Hatred*,

^v Luke i. 74.

and *Revenge*; should yet in *two years time* be reduced to that degree, as not to let the least corner of it remain *Unconquer'd*?

Where can we find any Instances that may serve to parallel the *Battles* that have been fought, and the *Attempts* that have been made, upon this *Occasion*? Scarce did ever *Despair* its self oblige Men to run such *Hazards* as our *Forces* have freely done; and that, by the wonderful *Providence* of God, with Success too.

Nor let any here Object either the *Treachery* or *Cowardice* of our *Enemies*; as if it were to these we ought to ascribe a great part of that Success we have had against them. But rather let us attribute these *Blessings*, as most certainly we ought to do, to the *Favour* of God; to the *Justice* of our *Cause*; and to the *Fortune* and *Bravery* of our *Princes*; dear to Heaven, and rais'd up by it to be the *Instruments* of *Providence*, in reforming the *Manners*, and redressing the *Oppressions*, of an injured and groaning World: In short, to the help of that Hand which has so plainly shewn its self in all this *Deliverance*, that we may with assurance cry out with the *holy Man* in our *Text*; *It is the LORD who giveth Victory unto Kings; that hath delivered David his Servant from the hurtful Sword.*

And having thus fulfill'd this *first part* of this day; let us to our *Tribute of Praise and Thanksgiving* add,

2^{dly}. Our *Prayers*, that He would vouchsafe to *Accomplish* what He has thus graciously begun
for

for Us; and not cease to *protect* our *King*, and *Prosper* his *Arms*, till he shall have finally *delivered* us out of *all* our *Dangers*.

It was the complaint of *David* heretofore, and what made him so much the more earnest in his *Requests* to God for his assistance, that his *Enemies* were Men of no *Religion*; neither whose *Faith* could be *rely'd* on, nor could any thing keep them from doing him a *Mischief*, but only their being reduced to such a *State*, as not to have it in their *Power* to *hurt* Him.

This is the *Character* which He gives Us of Them in the *Text*: And what a deep Impression the Consideration hereof made upon his Mind we may see by this, that he not only insists upon it in his *Prayer* to God against Them, as one great *Motive* to implore his *Help* for the utter *Destruction* of Them; but repeats it *again* and *again*: *Send thine hand from above*, says He, *rid me, and deliver me out of the great Waters, from the hand of strange Children, whose Mouth speaketh Vanity, and their right-hand is a right-hand of Falshood*, *ŷ. 7, 8.* And again, *ŷ. 11.* *Rid me and deliver me from the Hand of strange Children, whose Mouth speaketh Vanity, and their right-hand is a right-hand of Falsehood.*

So that now then if we would know how far we are concern'd to joyn with *David* in the *Prayer* before us, we must stop a little, and consider how nearly *our Enemies* resemble his. And if upon the Enquiry it shall appear that they come up in every *particular* to the full *Character*

eter of those in the *Text*; if it shall be found that we have now to do with the like *strange Children* that he had heretofore, *whose Mouth speaketh Vanity, and their right-hand is a right-hand of Falsehood*: Then doubtless it must remain that we ought also to pray, as he did, that God would *rid us, and deliver us*, out of their *Hands*.

And 1st. As to what concerns the Point of *Religion*; they are in the utmost import of the *Phrase strange Children*. They not only differ from us both in their *Faith* and *Worship*; but they do what in them lies to Destroy our *Religion*, and even *our Selves* for *its sake*.

How many *Protestant Churches* have within these few Years been *demolish'd* by them? What *Multitudes* of our *Brethren* have they *persecuted* into *strange Countries*? And with what unheard of *Cruelty* have they treated such as could not escape out of their *Hands*?

Nor did their *Fury* stop within the *Bounds* of their own *Country*: It reach'd even into *Foreign Lands*? And they did what in them lay to promote the same Treatment of them all the World over. I need not tell you by whose means the

^w See a *Catalogue* of them set out in Triumph by Monsieur le Feure, *Nouveau Recueil*: a la fin de la 3^{me} Partie. Monsieur *Va- rillas* boasts that they were 2150.

^x See *Plaints des Protestans*: * *l'Etat des Reformez en France*; * *Lettres Pastorales* de Mr. *Jurieu*; * *Recueil* de Mr. le Feure: * *De- fense des libertez des Eglises R. de France*.

ancient ^y *Churches* of the *Valleys* were almost totally extirpated. And how fast the same Design was carrying on in our own Country, you all very well know.

When the *Decree* for revoking, the once supposed *Irrevocable Edict* of *Nantes*, was resolved on; it was not thought sufficient to extend the Fury of it to the *Subjects* of the *Crown* of *France* only, but they struck even at *Foreigners* too. ^z And all the *Grace* that could be allow'd them was that they might *live*, and *Traffick* in that *Country*, but then they must not exercise any *Act* of *Religion* within its *Territories*.

Nay but this was yet too much, and therefore another ^a *Edict* was sent out, and such as I believe was scarcely ever heard of before; forbidding all *Ministers*, as well *Strangers*, as *French*, to come into that *Kingdom* upon any account whatsoever, upon *Pain* of *Death*.

I shall not now enquire how consistent such *Decrees* as these are with the *Common Laws* of *Nations* ^b; or whether it ought not justly to excite all other *Princes* to rise up and unite against him

^y See an Account of this in the *Letters* between the D. of *Savoy*, and the *French King*, translated from the Originals, and Printed, *Anno* 1690.

^z Arrest. du. 11. Janvier. 1686. — Ala charge qu'ils ne pourront faire dans le Royaume aucun Exercise de leur Religion.

^a Du, 12. Juillet. 1686. Art. 1. Nous defendons a tous Ministres de la R. P. R. tant *Francois* qu' *Estrangers*, de rentrer dans notre Royaume-pour quelque raison ou pretext que ce puisse etre—& en cas qu'il s'y en trouve—voulons qu'ils soient punis de MORT.

^b See their Majesties *Declaration of War*, against the *French King*.

as their *Common Enemy*, who thus sets himself up, ^c *Alone against All.* ^d As if he were indeed, what some of his *Flatterers* doubt not to represent him, the *Universal Monarch*; and all other *Princes* but as so many *Slaves* and *Vassals* to him. But sure I am that our *Prayers* cannot but be seasonable, and even pious, against such an *Enemy*; who is not only a *Stranger* to the *true Religion*, but one of the *greatest Persecutors* of it that ever was; and as such may well be look'd upon by us to be *God's Enemy* no less than *Ours*.

But 2^{dly}. and to carry the *Parallel* yet higher: We have to do not only with *strange Children*, as *David* also had; but with such whose *Mouths* also speak *Vanity*, and their *right-hand* is a *right-hand of Falshood*. That is, in other words, with such as can never securely be *trusted* by us,

^c *Un a Tous.*

^d See *le Feure*, in his *Dedication*. On se persuaderoit difficilement, que Vous eussiez forcé toute l'Europe a embrasser les Conditions de Paix qu'il avoit plu a V. Majesté de luy prescrire. Que vous eussiez Obligé des Soveraigns a venir implorer votre Clemence, aux pieds de vostre Trons. Nor is this any more than what their publick *Inscriptions* justify: In one we find this Verse: *Undarum, Terreque potens, atque ARBITER ORBIS.* In another He is set forth under the Emblem of the *Sun*, at whose breaking out all the other *Princes*, like so many *Stars* disappear; with this Motto, *UT PATET ISTA LATENT.* Particularly with relation to *England*, a *Lion* is represented running from the *Cock*; with this Motto, *Veni, Vidi, Vici.* And to mention no more, in another Medal the King of *France* is drawn standing with the *Globe* on the Point of his *Sword*, vaunting that he does what he pleases with it; *Quod liber, licet.* See the *Collection* of Father *Menetrier*.

whilst

whilst they are in a Condition to do us a Mischief.

A sufficient Argument of which may I think be taken from the Consideration of those *Measures* by which they have acted in this *last Reign*; and grown up to that *Power* which is now become so *formidable* to all *Europe*. For give me leave freely to remonstrate it to you: When did they ever neglect by any means to *enlarge* their *Borders*, and encroach upon all their *Neighbours* round about them? What little *Pretences* have many times served them so to do? And why then should it be thought that they will be more careful to *repress* their *Violences*, and keep within the Bounds of *Equity* and *Moderation* for the time to come, than they have been to observe any such kind of Measures hitherto?

The truth is when I consider with what gross *Injustice* the many *Treaties* of *Pacification* confirmed by *five Successive Kings* to those of the *Reform'd Religion*, have all been broken; How

^e See an Account of all this in a little *Traët* lately Reprinted viz. *Christianissimus Christianandus*.

^f Charles IX. 1573. gave them an *Edict* which He call'd *Perpetual* and *Irrevocable*.

This was confirm'd by Henry III. in 1576. and 1577. And again in 1579. and 1580.

Then follow'd the Great *Edict* of *Nantes* under King Henry IV.

This was confirm'd by Lewis XIII. Anno. 1610. and again An. 1615.

And by the present King An. 1643. and 1652. In the former of which, speaking of the *Edicts* before mention'd, 'tis said; Lesquels *Edits*, bien que *PERPETUELS*, nous avons de nouveau, entant qu'il besoin est, ou seroit, confirmez, & *Confirmons* par ces dites *Presentes*.

the very *Edict* of *Nantes* its self, not only call'd *Perpetual*, and *Irrevocable*, but with all possible care endeavour'd to have been ^g made so; confirm'd *twice* by that *Prince*, who has since revoked it; has nevertheless been violated, and contrary to the express Intention of it, their *Religion* prohibited, their *Estates* confiscated, *themselves* banish'd, or else forced either to *Rot* in their *Prisons*, or be made *Slaves* in their *Galleys*: I cannot but think, that certainly that *Maxim* so often charged upon those of the *Other Communion*, ^h that *Faith* is not to be kept with *Hereticks*, is much more *Catholick* than they would have it believed to be; but especially in those *places* where that *Society* prevails, which is of all others the most deservedly *Scandalous*, for being the chief *Supporters* of such kind of *Tricks* and *Devices*.

And should this be the *Case*; then I am sure we may here also have again another Reason both to look to our selves; and to *pray* with the *Holy Psalmist* that God would deliver us from such *Enemies*, whose *Mouth speaketh Vanity*, and their *right-hand is a right-hand of falsehood*.

But I must go yet farther; and offer you another Reflection, which will shew us to have still more reason, than ever *He* had, to pray against our *Enemies*: And that is upon the account of that *Ruin* and *Destruction* which they carry

^g See Def. des lib. des Egl. R. de Fr. pt. 1st.

^h See the State of the Protestants in *Ireland*, Chap. III. §. 13. p. 169, &c. to 178.

wherever

wherever they come; almost beyond whatever any *People in the World ever did* before.

For however the *Misfortunes of War* are always very deplorable; and they who are esteem'd the most moderate, nevertheless allow themselves a great *Liberty to Wast and Destroy*; yet I think it has been ever judg'd by all *civilized Nations* whatsoever, that there is a ⁱ *Moderation* to be observed against an *Enemy*; and that the *Laws* both of *God*, of *Nature*, and *Nations*, require it of us.

It is this that has prevail'd with the *greatest* ^k *Generals* heretofore to spare the *Country* of their *Enemy*, as far as might be done without Injury to their own Cause. But alas! Our *Adversaries* are above such Menagements. On the contrary, their delight is to *Ruin* what they cannot *Conquer*; and according to one of their own ^l *Emblems*, to ravage and destroy all before them.

How many ^m *Noble and Ancient Cities* have they but very lately left in *Flames*, and that without the least Reason, that should have moved

ⁱ See this largely discuss'd by *Grotius de Jure Belli, &c.* lib. iii. ch. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.

^k See *Grotius, ib.* l. 3. cap. 11. §. 2. Themist. Or. x. p. 259.

^l In a late *Medal* they represent themselves under the figure of a *Bomb* towing in the Air, with this *Inscription*, *Quocunque cadit, Dat Stragem.*

^m *Spire, Worms Bon, &c.* See the *Emperor's Letter* to King *James*, April 9. 1689. A great part of the North of *Ireland*, burnt by *Rosen*.

them so to do? ⁿ Even the *Houses* of God, and *Sepulchres* of the *Dead*; which the most *barbarous* People were wont to regard with *Reverence*, and thought it a *Sacrilege* to violate; have all partaken in their undistinguishing, and unrelenting *Fury*.

When the great *Emperor* of ^o *Persia* declar'd *War* against the *Assyrians*, the *Historian* tells us it was agreed between them, that the *Husband-men*, and *Common-people*, should on both sides be secure; and the *War* extend only to those who were *arm'd* for it. And we read ^p that it was a *constant Law* among others, in those *Eastern Countries*, to observe the same Measures. But now we see even these *miserable, disarm'd People*, not only spoil'd of all they have, but contrary to their own *Agreements*, as well as to *Common-Humanity*, put often-times under the *severest Execution*, when they have nothing but their *Lives* left them to lose.

And when such is the *Cruelty*, and *Fury* of our *Enemies*; certainly we ought to pray with all *earnestness* to God against *them*, as we would do against some *devouring Fire*, or a *raging Pestilence*: And beseech him that He would still continue to *deliver us* out of their *Hands*, as well as *bless* him that he has hitherto *preserved us* from them.

ⁿ See *Grotius*, l. c. *St. Austin* commends the *Goths* when they took *Rome* for sparing these, *De Civ. D. lib. i. Grot. ib.*

^o *Xenophon*, *Oecon.* l. 2.

^p See *Diodorus Siculus*, l. 2. To which *Grotius* adds many more Instances. *De Jure B. ac P. l. 3. c. 12. §. 4. & in Annot.*

Nor let us look upon our selves to be ever the less concern'd to do this, because we do not lie so much *expos'd* to their *Affaults*, as some others may seem to do. It is indeed the singular happiness of our *Situation*, that we cannot presently be surpriz'd by them; but yet if we do not timely prevent it, we may be *conquered*. They who from either *none* at all, or at best but a very small *Power* at *Sea*, are already grown up to such a pitch as to dispute with us for *Victory*; may perhaps, if not prevented, in a little time become able indeed to *give Laws* to us. And what the *Consequence* of that must be, I cannot without horror consider.

But God forbid We should ever be so unhappy as to fall into the hands of those whose usage of their own *Country-men* too plainly shews what all others are to expect from them. Rather let it be the great Business both of our *Prayers*, and of our *Endeavours*, now that God seems again to offer us a fair opportunity of securing our *Selves*, and *Country*; our *Religion*, and *Liberties*; against their Devices, effectually so to do.

Let the consideration of that *Success* which he has already given to our *Arms*, encourage us to go on with the greater *diligence* to our common Preservation.

Let it *unite* our *Minds*, and *quicken* our *Preparations*, that so we may not fail in the *last*

¹ In another of their late Medals they have represented the Helm of a Ship in the Sea, with this Inscription, *Legem ponis Aquis.*

Act; nor fall at once both under the *Reproach*, and the *Concern*, of being ruin'd by our own *Fault*, when hardly any thing else could have done it.

And that God may continue to bless us in these our great Undertakings; let us to our *care* for our Own, and our *Countries welfare*, add also our hearty Zeal for the *Honour of God*, and the *promotion of Truth*, and *Peace*, and *Piety*, among us.

Let us do what in us lies to *imitate* the *Examples*; and to comply with the *pious Care*, and *Endeavours*, of those whom God has made the *happy Instruments* of our *Preservation*. That so we may in some measure answer the *Ends* of his *Providence* in our *Deliverance*: And being *saved from our Enemies*, and *from the hands of those that hate us*, may *serve him without fear*; in *Holiness and Righteousness* before him all the *days of our Life*^r.

So may all those *Blessings* we have already receiv'd, be only the *Beginnings* of that *great Felicity* we shall from henceforth enjoy! When God shall have changed even this *Prayer* too, into a *Song of Thanksgiving*; and instead of supplicating any more with *David*, *Rid Us*, and *deliver Us from the hand of strange Children*, whose *Mouth speaketh Vanity*, and their *right-hand is a right-hand of Falsehood*; We shall have only remaining to *give thanks* as he did, when his labour was at an end, and God had finally deli-

^r Luke i. 74.

ver'd him from all his Enemies; 2 Sam. xxii. 40. Thou hast girded us with strength to the Battle, them that rose up against us hast thou subdu'd under us^s. Thou hast also given us the Necks of our Enemies, that we might destroy them that hate us. They looked but there was none to save; even unto the Lord but he answer'd them not. —Therefore, We will give thanks unto Thee O LORD among the Heathen, and we will sing praises unto Thy Name. He is the Tower of Salvation for his King; and sheweth mercy unto his Anointed; and to his Seed for Evermore.

^c Now unto the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible; to the Great and Wise God, who is the Blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; ^u Be Honour and Glory for Ever and Ever. Amen.

^s 2. Sam. xxii. 40, 41, 42, 50, 51.

^c 1 Tim. i. 17.

^u Ib. vi. 15.



S E R M O N VII.

Preached before the

Honourable Society

O F

G R A Y's - I N N:

Upon the Death of Queen *Mary*.

Pfal. cxlvi. 3, 4, 5.

*Put not your Trust in Princes, nor in the
Son of Man, in whom there is no Help.
His Breath goeth forth, He returneth to
his Earth ; in that very Day his Thoughts
perish.*

*Happy is he who hath the God of Jacob
for his Help, whose Hope is in the
LORD his God.*



F ever any People had a just occasion
given them to enter upon those Refle-
ctions which these Words naturally pre-
sent to us ; and to consider, how little
dependance

dependance is to be placed upon the *Best*, or *Greatest*, among the *Children of Men*: I may with confidence say, that we of this Nation have at this time, a most eminent Occasion given us by the Divine Providence so to do.

It has pleased God, within these few days, to deprive us of a most excellent *Princess*; under whom we had flatter'd our selves that we should have long enjoy'd a more than ordinary portion of Happiness and Prosperity. A Person she was as by the greatness of her Character qualified beyond most Others to have become a *National Blessing*; so by the many incomparable Endowments God had bestow'd upon her, in a singular manner disposed so to be. And as this raised our hopes into some more than ordinary expectations from her; so that firmness of Constitution which she enjoy'd, accompanied with a yet early and vigorous Youth, seem'd to promise us that we should be many years blessed under the influence both of her Authority, and of her Example.

But alas! how suddenly are all these Hopes cut off, and our Expectations brought to an end! And nothing left us but the sad reflection, how grievously mistaken we were in our opinion of our own Happiness; and how little *trust* is to be put in *Any* but that *God*, who *alone* enjoys a *Certainty* of *Being*, and therefore can *alone* with safety be *depended* upon.

In the words before us, there are these two things that naturally offer themselves to our Consideration :

First, That it is a vain thing to *put our Trust* in any Man, be his Rank, or Condition, never so great; upon this double Account;

(1.) That his *Power to help us*, is very *small*:
 Y. 3. And,

(2.) His *Life short*, and *uncertain*, Y. 4.

And therefore to *Trust* in such a person, must be to repose our Confidence in One who oftentimes *cannot help us*; and, in a little while, *will fail us*.

Secondly, That he who will *place his Trust* upon a sure foundation, must place it upon *God*; who *alone is always able*, and will *always continue* in a condition, to *help and defend us*.

And, First, That it is a vain thing to *put our Trust* in any Man, be his Rank, or Condition, never so great; because both his *Power to help* is very *small*, and his *Life short*, and *uncertain*: And therefore to *Trust* in such a Person, must be to build our Hope upon one who oftentimes *may not be Able to help us*; and very probably, in a little while *will fail us*.

This is a Consideration both so certain in its self, and so obvious to the meanest Capacity; that did we not see Men every day overlook it in their practice, one might think it hardly needful to offer any Arguments, either to illustrate, or to confirm, the Truth of it. If

If (1st.) We consider the *Power*, of the greatest Persons, to *help* us; Alas! How little is it at the best? And, for the most part, how useless to us? In how many Cases does it surpass their Power to do us any Good? And even in those in which it may seem the most in their Power to assist us; yet how many Accidents may there fall out, to prevent us from being at all the better for it?

It may be they are *Unwilling* to *grant* us what we desire of them. Perhaps they are disposed to do *Somewhat* for us; but they will not be persuaded to do *so Much* as *our needs require*: And so spoil all the advantage we hoped to have reaped from their Kindness to us, for want of making their supply suitable to our Occasions.

It may be they are willing to do *All* that we desire of them, but not *Presently*: They put off the time; till at last, by their delays, their Favour comes too late to us.

Or lastly, It is possible that in a little while they may *Change* their *Minds*, and with them their *Affections* towards us: And so where we thought to have found a *Friend*, we may meet an *Enemy*; One who is disposed rather to do us a mischief, than to lend any help or assistance to us.

So impotent, so trifling, so uncertain, and disingenuous a Creature is Man! And then, What vanity must it be for any one to place his *Trust* upon the Interest, or Authority; the Love, or Favour, of such an One? Who in the chiefest of our needs cannot Help us at all: And in those, wherein he is able to relieve us, will be apt either al-

together to fail us; or else to mix so much of Humane Frailty, and Infirmary, with his Favour, as shall render it of very little Use, and Benefit to us.

Nor let any one think that there is any *Order* of Men exempted from the force of these Reflections. The *greatest Persons* lie open to them, no less than those of a *lower degree*. Their *Power* indeed is Greater, they can do much more for us than other Men. But yet still it is far short of our Wants; and cannot answer one half of those Exigencies, in which we may stand in need of some one to Help, and Assist us.

Their *Minds* are *Mutable* no less than Other Mens: And they are by so much the more likely to Change in their Affections towards us, by how much the more they are exposed to the delusions of those about them; who are always envious of such as they take into their particular Favour; and will therefore be always endeavouring, by all imaginable methods, to bring us into Disgrace with them.

Their Favours are, generally, the *Longest* in *Coming*, and the *Hardest* to be *Obtain'd*: Whilst the very formality which attends the dispensing of them, oftentimes, costs so much, and causes such Delays; as is utterly inconsistent with many of those wants, wherein we might otherwise have promised our selves the most considerable advantage from their Favour, and Affection towards us.

From all which we must conclude, That it is a very vain thing to place any confidence in Man
upon

upon this first account, *viz.* That the Power, of the greatest Persons, to *Help* us is exceeding *Small*; exposed to so many Casualties, and attended with such Inconveniencies, as renders it of very little Use, and of no Dependance at all to us.

But (2^{dly.}) Were the Case quite otherwise; were there any Order of Men so perfect, in all other respects, that they *Could* supply us with *All* that we should ever be likely to *Want*, and *Would* give us whatsoever we should *Desire*: And were their *Inclination* towards us so *Fixt*, and *Immutable*, that we might depend upon them that they would *never forsake* us, but be at all times ready to grant us whatsoever we should ask of them: Yet still their Life is so *Uncertain*, and, at the best, so *Short*; that it would be a very vain thing for us, after all, to *set up* our *Trust*, and *Confidence*, upon them.

For alas! Where is the Man so Great, and Self-sufficient, that can secure himself the next Hours Breath? And in the height of all his Fortune presume to say, that to Morrow shall not lay him equal with the Dust, and return him to the Earth from whence he was taken?

It is an extraordinary Character which the Holy Spirit gives to some Persons, *Psal. lxxxii. 6. I have said that ye are Gods, and that ye are all the Children of the most High.* And yet what follows immediately upon it? A Sad, but Certain Truth: *Nevertheless ye shall Die like Men.* This is the Conclusion of all; the common End of the Greatest,

est, as well as of the Meanest Persons. Here they may seem to be a Sort of *Gods* upon Earth: May dispose of the Fortunes of Men as they please; set up, whom they will set up; and pull down, whom they will pull down. They may be Honour'd too as such, by those who know no Religion above their Interests; nor think any Divinity more worthy of their regard, than *Those* who have it in their power to promote them to Riches, and Honour, and Authority.

But *Death* observes none of these Formalities. When that strikes, the Crowned Head falls as easily before it, as He who had not where to lay his Head, till the Grave afforded him a place for it. All the difference is, that as such Persons are exposed to more Dangers, and subject to greater Hazards, than lesser Men; so their Lives are more uncertain; and, generally speaking, more short too. A Cottage may, and oftentimes does, afford us an Example of a Vigorous Old Age: But this is a Sight which the Palaces of Princes are seldom blessed with; nor can it reasonably be expected they should often enjoy it.

And when this is the Case, what a folly must it be to build our Hope upon such Protectors? Who are so far from being able to Help us, that alas! they are not able to help themselves, in those Instances, in which both they, and we, the most stand in need of Assistance. Whose Breath is not their own; Who live by the meer Favour of another: Who to day appear in Glory, and Honour;

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nour; and to morrow go down into the Grave, and yield to the Fate of other Ordinary Men.

So foolish a thing is it, in point of *Reason*, to put our *Trust* in *Man*; be the Place, the Power, or Authority which he enjoys, what it will. And for a yet more sensible Confirmation of this great Truth; give me leave, but briefly, to illustrate it to you, in that fatal Instance it has pleased God at this time to give us of it, in the Person of our late *Royal Sovereign*; whose sudden death too manifestly shews, how *little dependance* is to be placed upon any *Humane Support*; upon the best, or greatest, of the Children of Men.

If, *First*, We consider her with respect to her *Power*, and *Dignity*; She was *Queen* of a Mighty and Renowned People: Endued with the Highest Authority that a Crown could give her; and in that with the largest Capacity, that any Creature could pretend to, of *Doing Good*. Her Opportunities were many, and her Advantages very Great, for such a Purpose. Much was expected from Her; and we must, with gratitude, acknowledge, that much she did Do.

For indeed, 2^{dly}. Her *Will* was not at all less, nay, I may venture to say, it was much greater, than her *Power*. Nor did she value any thing so much in the eminence of that Station to which it had pleased God to raise her, as that it put her in a condition of extending the exercise of her Virtues a great deal farther, than it had been possible for her to have done in a private Fortune.

Never

Never was there Any one in so High a Place, more free, and easy of Access, even to the most Ordinary Persons: More desirous to Oblige all, or that better knew how to do it. Insomuch that I believe it has seldom been known that any ever applied to Her, but what have gone away Easy and Contented from Her: And either obtained what they wanted, or not known how to complain, if they have not.

The Truth is, She was a Person in whom *Nature*, and *Grace*, seem to have concurr'd, to make up One great Master-piece of Excellency, and Perfection.

Her *Natural Disposition* was Free, and Generous; Open, and Sincere. She had a Sweetness of Temper, finish'd, and heightned, with a large Mixture of Christian Charity and Compassion: Such as never loved to see any in Misery, otherwise than as it give her an Opportunity thereby of Doing somewhat for them to make them Easy.

Thus was she fitted to *Do Good*: And a singular Dexterity She had in Doing of it. She knew *What* was fit to be done for Every One; and *After what Manner*; and *At what Time*. And seldom did she vouchsafe a favour to Any, but the very Way in which she bestow'd it doubled the Obligation; and made a deeper Impression upon the Mind of Him who receiv'd it, than the Benefit its self did.

In short; So great was her Comprehension; So correct her Judgment; So easy her Dispatch,
of

of whatever came before her; that God seemed to have fitted her Soul to her Place and Character; and to have given her a Capacity as far beyond that of other Common Persons, as she was in Rank, and Dignity, above Them.

Such good reason had we, upon all these accounts, to expect some more than Ordinary Blessings under her Government; and to put a greater *Trust*, and *Confidence* in her, than was almost fit to be placed in any Creature. And the more to encourage us so to do, it had pleased God to all his other endowments, to add such a Vigour of Body, such a Firmness of Constitution, as seem'd to equal the Vivacity of her Mind: And promised us almost an Age of Happiness yet to come, under the Influence of her Government.

And now, when so many circumstances concurr'd to encourage our Reliance upon Her, who could blame us for being willing to flatter our selves, that such a *Queen* was certainly rais'd up by God to do some extraordinary Good for that *Church*, and *Kingdom*, to which he had given her? But alas! a sad Experience has shewn us, that we ought not to have *put* our *Trust* even in *Such a Person*. And if *Such a Person* may not be rely'd upon, we may then safely conclude, that we must look beyond this World for our *Support*: And not place our Confidence on any but that *God*, who alone both can do all things for us; and will continue, for ever, to help and defend us.

Which

Which therefore brings me to the Other Point I proposed to speak to;

Secondly, That he who will *place* his *Trust* upon a sure Foundation, must *place* it upon *God*; who alone is *Able* to *Succour* us in *All* our *Exigencies*, and will *always* continue in a *Capacity* *so* to *do*.

And 1st. That God is *Able* to *Succour* us in *All* our *Exigencies*; is evident from hence, that he is *Able to do whatsoever he pleases both in Heaven and Earth*^b. * That he has no Equal, much less any Superiour Power, to Controul his Will; or to hinder him from bringing whatsoever he purposes, to the End which he Designs. * That as he is the first Being, and Author of all Others; So was there Nothing before him to confine, or limit his Perfections. He received not his Power from Any; Nor has he therefore any restraint upon it, but what proceeds from himself, and is subject to his Own Will.

Man, as he was Created by God, so was he limited too by him in his State, and Condition, to a certain Degree of Perfection, which he cannot pass, nor raise up himself above it. And therefore, whatsoever Power he has, is confined within those bounds which the Divine Wisdom has thought fit to set to it: Nor can he Go, the least tittle, beyond what God has permitted him to Do.

^b Psal. cxxxv. 6.

But God himself is Free, and without Constraint. With him nothing is impossible, but what is Sinful; and to do that would not be an Instance of true Power, but of Impotency, and Infirmary.

So that if we would then *Trust* in *Man*, we must do it with those Restrictions which his Nature requires us to limit our *Trust* withall: And depend upon Him as One whose *Power* may fail; whose *Mind* may change; nay, whose very *Life* may be taken from him.

But with God we shall need none of these reserves. He is absolutely Able to Help and Succour us in all our dangers and necessities: And in all such cases wherein it is fitting for him to do it, He will help us, if we do but duly apply our selves to Him, and depend upon Him. And when such is the Advantage of God, in this respect, above any of his Creatures; much more above Man, the lowest of all the Rational Kind in Power and Dignity; well may the *Psalmist* pronounce him *Blessed*, whose Wisdom and Piety have taught him to fix his *Trust* there, where nothing can hinder it from being Beneficial to Him, but his own neglecting to seek for help as he ought to do.

I say nothing now of the many Other Arguments that might be offered to encourage us in this *Trust*, and to shew the Happiness of that Man who has placed his Hope upon it. Such are,
* The infinite *Wisdom* of God, in judging *what* is *Best* for Us, and after *what Manner* it will be most for our Interest to be *Helped* by him. * His

infinite

infinite *Knowledge*, for the *discovery* of our *Wants*, oftentimes long before We our selves are sensible of them. * His *Power* not only to relieve Us, in *All* our *Exigencies*, which I have before observed; but to do it in a *Moment*, at the very *Minute* that it will be the most Seasonable for Us to have it done. And, not to mention any more; * His *Ability* to *Prevent Evils from coming* upon us, no less than to *Free* us *from* them, or to *Support* us *under* Them, when they have overtaken Us: And in all which the Wisdom, and Power of Man, can either Do nothing at all, or nothing comparable to what God is able to Do.

But One Consideration more there is, which neither the express *Words* of my *Text*, nor the Occasion of the present Discourse, will permit me to pass by: And that is, 2^{dly}. That God is not only thus *Able*, as I have shewn, to *help* us in *all* our *Needs*; but *will continue* for *ever* in a *Capacity* to *save* and *defend* Us. For God is Eternal in his Duration, as well as Infinite in his Power; and as He never had a Beginning of Being, so neither can He ever Come to an End of it.

Now how far this sets him up above all *Earthly Benefactors*, I have already shewn you; and the mighty Loss we have just now sustain'd, does but too plainly Declare.

When one of our *Earthly Benefactors* Dies, all his good Dispositions towards us perish together with Him, and together with them all his Power too of
 putting

putting them in Execution, from that instant, Ceases. And we from thenceforth become as destitute and forlorne, as if we had never had any such Friend, or Patron, to rely upon. In such a *Trust* therefore there is no Certainty: Nothing on which to build any lasting Hope; any wise and comfortable Expectation.

But *God endureth for ever^c*, and therefore his *Help* can never fail us. He will be *our Guide unto Death^d*; nay, and even after it too will save and deliver us. The Grave its self, which puts an end to all things else, cannot take us out of his Hand, nor deprive us of his Protection. But in that melancholy Place, and State, tho' we know but little else of what relates to it; yet this we are sure of, that our *Souls* continue under his Care: And that, after a certain Period of time, our very Bodies themselves shall again be restored to us; and so *we shall be for ever with the LORD^e*.

And thus I have shewn you, what the Advantages of that God are^e, above all other *Supporters*, in whom our *Text* exhorts us to *put our Trust*; and pronounces him *Happy* who has taken care so to do. And when such are his Prerogatives above any of his Creatures, in this respect, as well as in all others; what resolution can we better take up, than that which is pointed out to us in that Exhortation of the Evangelical Prophet, Isai. xxvi. 4. *Trust ye in the LORD for*

^c Psal. ix. 7. cii. 12.^d Ib. xlviii. 14.^e 1 Thes. iv. 17.

ever; for in the LORD *Jehovah* is everlasting Strength.

And this may suffice for the *two Points* I proposed to speak to: I shall only draw a few plain *Consequences* from what has been said, and so conclude this Discourse. And,

First, Since such is the Vanity of *putting* our *Trust* in any *Humane Help*; let us resolve to take off our hearts from all such dependencies: And not build our *Hope* on such a foundation, as we are sure in a little time will fail us, and we cannot tell how soon it may do so.

I do not deny, but that as *God* orders the affairs of mankind by the ministry of *Second Causes*; so we may, without incurring any just censure for it, look to them as the *Instruments* which he makes use of in his Dispensations towards us. Nay, we may *put* some kind of *Trust* too in them: Provided that it goes no farther than the *Nature* of such *Causes* admits of; and that we still take care to look beyond them, to that *God* who employs them to our Interest and Advantage. But yet, when all is done, our last, and highest dependance, must be placed upon *God* only; who alone is able, and will always be so, in all our exigencies to help and deliver us.

It cannot be doubted but that we of *this Country*, and especially we of *this Church*, have received as great a loss as could well have happen'd to us, in the unexpected *Death* of our late *Royal Sovereign*.

A Prin-

A *Princess* she was, such as this Nation never before had, nor was it now worthy of her. To draw her Character, and set her out to you with all the advantage that her real Worth deserves, is a task too difficult for me to presume to attempt: Though this security I should have in the doing of it, that let me say what I could, no one would accuse me of *Flattery* in it: A Vice ever odious, and I think no where more so than in the Pulpit. For howsoever 'tis impossible to speak of Her, and not say Great things; yet very hard it is to speak, but a small Part, of what all must allow might justly be reported of Her. Let it suffice, at present, to say; That if a *Queen* so *Virtuous*, that her very Example was enough to convert a Libertine, and to reform an Age: So *Courteous*, and *Affable*, as to be the wonder and delight of all that knew her: So great a *Lover* of her Country, and the *Interests* of it; as to be willing to hazard what, next her Conscience, she the most valued, her good Name, and good Opinion in the World, for the Preservation of them; So *firm* and *constant* in her *Mind*, as not to have once known, no not in *Death* it self, what it was to fear: So *Happy* in *Business*, as to astonish, rather than satisfy, those who were the best versed in it: I say, if to have been deprived of such a *Queen* as this; and that at such an Age, when our expectations were at the highest from Her; be a loss above the power of Words to express; then such is our loss: The greatness of which we are so far from being able sufficiently to declare, that

perhaps we cannot yet make a just Estimate of it.

But yet, were we not hereby too much convinced, how little we ought to depend upon *such kind of Helps*; I might presume to say, to the Glory of God, and to our own Comfort, that we had still enough of these remaining, to suppress all disorderly fears, and undue repinings, at that which we have lost.

God has removed our *Queen* from us; but He still continues *his Sacred Majesty* to us, notwithstanding all the Dangers to which He has been exposed. He has deprived us of the benefit of *Her* conduct: But He has left us *Him*, under whom *She her self* grew up in that Wisdom, and Courage, we so much admired in Her.

And even beyond this, we have the prospect of a yet further *Succession* to fill the *Throne*; and to support the Interests both of the *Church*, and *State*, amongst us.

But yet when all is done, 'tis not upon these fair and promising Expectations that we must place our *Trust*, or account the fortune of our *Publick Welfare* to depend. It is that *God*, who has so long and wonderfully defended us, that must still be our *Support*; or all these *Helps* will signify Nothing to us.

Indeed these are the Persons by whom we justly may, and therefore accordingly do *Hope*, to be *Protected* and *Defended*. And a singular Happiness it is to us, that we have such a fair *Succession* of the *Royal Family* before our Eyes.

But

But yet when all is done, 'tis from the Blessing of *God* in preserving these Persons to us, and prospering their Endeavours, that we must look for safety: And *God*, even without any such *Helps*, could, if he pleased, *secure* and *protect* us. But,

Secondly, As these Considerations should move us, not to put our *Trust* in any *Humane Help*; so should they keep us from being very much *surprized*, if at any time such kind of *Helps* shall chance to *fail* us.

It was a great Expression, and argued a worthy Mind, in Him anciently, who being told of the Death of his Son, pass'd it off with this only Reflection; That *He always knew that He was Mortal*.

And the same should be our Consideration upon these Occasions. We know that all *Humane Helps* are Transitory, and Uncertain: And why then should we stand amazed, as if some strange thing had happen'd to us, when we come to be deprived of that, which we always knew we had no security of?

I am not so unsensible of the loss we have now received, as not to think that we ought to pay a very just regret to it; and to consider seriously with our selves, for what Sins of this Nation it is that *God* has taken away from us our *Royal Defender*. But yet I cannot think that it ought to be any great *Surprize* to us: Unless it be some new thing to see a Mortal Die,

and to find that to have happen'd to One, which happens to Thousands every Day.

Nay, but *Thirdly*; We ought not only not to be *Surprized* at the failure of such kind of *Helps*, but neither should we be *immoderately concern'd*, and *cast down* at it; because *God* is nevertheless *Able to preserve* us for the loss of these, but can either *raise* us up *New Supporters*, or *save* us without *Any*, if He rather sees fit so to Do.

I am verily perswaded that we have at this time received as sensible a Blow, in this respect, in the loss of our *Royal Sovereign*, as could have befallen us in any One Life, excepting that of His *Sacred Majesty*. But yet far be it from me so far to *despond*, or to *distrust* the *Providence of God*, as to think we must needs be *ruined*, because our *Queen* is taken from us. This were certainly too much to confine the Power of *God*, and to give too great an Advantage to our Enemies; who because they earnestly wish our ruin, are therefore ready upon every occasion, to flatter themselves that the time is coming which they so much desire to see.

But to shew you how little Reason either we have to be dejected, or they to exalt their hopes, on any such Account; Let us suppose the Case be as bad as the most melancholy Mind can fancy, or our most bitter Enemies could desire it to be. That we were indeed left naked, and destitute of all *Humane* help; and had no prospect remaining of any succour, much less had so good a one, as I have before shewn, and as it is evident to
all

all the World that we have: Yet still I say, that all this would not be enough to warrant us to *Distrust* God; but rather,

Fourthly, We should then more especially *re-*
ly upon his *Help*, when all other *Supports* do
the most fail us.

It is too common a thing with most Men, when their affairs go smoothly on, and all succeeds according to their desires, to attribute too much to their own Power, and Policy; and to forget that *God*, without whose *Help* all their own endeavours would be to no purpose. And therefore to prevent this, *God* is pleased oftentimes to suffer Men to fall into great Difficulties; not that he designs their Ruin, but only to make them sensible of their own Weakness; and to draw them back to him who is their only sure *Defence*, the *Rock* of their *Salvation* in whom they ought to *trust*^f.

It were an easy Matter for me to confirm the truth of this Remark in a multitude of *Instances*; from whence it may appear, that God has in all ages then especially exerted his Power in the delivery of his Servants, when their Enemies have thought themselves the most secure of their destruction. But I shall content my self with a few Examples; tho' such as I am persuaded, may abundantly suffice to shew, How *false* a *Conclusion* Men make, when they presume to determine; That because God *deprives* any *People* of the

^f Psal. xviii. 2. lxii. 7, &c.

present visible Means of Deliverance, therefore he designs to *give them up to Destruction*.

When *Haman*^g projected the universal extirpation of the whole People of the *Jews*; and was come so near to an accomplishment of it, that the Order was signed, and the Command gone forth, for a general Massacre of them; who could have imagined any other, but that the final ruin of that poor Nation was at hand. And yet by what a strange concurrence of unexpected^h Events were they delivered from this danger, and the Mischief turn'd upon his head who had contrived their Destruction?

Nor was their Preservation afterwards less remarkable, when ⁱ*Caligula* sent *Petronius* into *Syria*, to set up his *Statue* in the *Temple* at *Jerusalem*; and the *Jews* resolved every Man of them to perish, rather than submit to so abominable a Profanation of that Holy Place.

It were too long for me to relate to you, how far *Petronius* insisted upon the putting of this Command in execution; and what he did in order thereunto. It shall suffice to say, that his Army was drawn together, and every thing just ready to come to the last extremity: When the *Governour* considering how sad a thing it would be to root out a whole Nation for so small a matter, stopp'd his Soldiers, and wrote the *Emperor* an account both of what he had done, and how averse he found the *Jews* to his Design; and there-

^f Esther iii. 6, 12, 13.

^g Ib. ch. v, vi, vii, viii.

^h Joseph. Ant. l. xviii. c. 11. De Bell. Jud. Lib. i. cap. 17.

fore intreated him not to pursue his attempt any farther.

But in vain was this delay; nor could any of these remonstrances alter the *Emperor's* resolutions. On the contrary, he renew'd his Orders yet more peremptorily, of having the *Jews* destroy'd for opposing his Will; and commanded *Petronius* himself to be murdered with them, for deferring so long the Execution of his Command.

And now, what could be expected by that miserable *People*, but Ruin, and Desolation? When behold! God took their Cause into his own hand: And so disposed matters, that before this *Second Order* could reach *Syria*, the news of the *Emperor's* own Murder flew thither; and saved both the *Governour*, and *Them*, from that destruction which was just ready to break in upon Both.

So able is God, when things seem to be at the very worst, to interpose his Hand; and to save those who *trust* in *Him*, not only without any visible Means, but against all Humane Appearances. And for yet fresher ^k*Instances* of this, let me only desire you to reflect how strangely God has preserved, for several Ages together, those ancient *Reformed Churches* in the *Valleys* of *Piedmont*; notwithstanding all the Power and Malice of their Enemies to root them out.

It is but a very little while since we saw them reduced to so wretched an estate, that we account-

^k See their History written by Gilles, Leger, Morland, &c.

ed them to have been dispersed beyond all hope of any future Restitution. Their own *Prince*, supported with the Power, and led on by the Example, and Encouragement, of a mighty Neighbouring *Monarch*, had resolved upon their Ruin. Sorrow and Distress encompass'd them on every side, and from whom to expect a deliverance they could not tell. And yet, lo! these very *Churches* are again already restored to their ancient Splendor: And, to encrease the wonder, are now protected by that very Power that before destroyed Them.

But what need I lead you into *foreign Countries* for *Instances* to shew, that God is not *confined* in his workings to *Humane Appearances*; but oftentimes is then the most ready to support his Servants when all other *Helps* the most fail Them. Our own *Country*, and our own *Church*, ever since the *Reformation*; has been more or less a continued evidence of the Truth of this Remark.

How melancholy was the Prospect which our Forefathers had, at the untimely Death of that most excellent *Prince*, King *Edward VI.* when Queen *Mary* being set upon the Throne, nothing was to be expected by Them, but an utter Extirpation of all that seemed in any wise to favour the *Purity of Religion* among them.

What¹ she did, and How far she went, in a few years, to blot out all the memory of her

¹ See Dr. Burnet's *Hist. of the Reformation*.

Brother's piety, I shall not need to say: The History is still fresh in all your Memories. Yet in the midst of all their trouble; when the hope of their Enemies, and their own Fears were at the highest; it pleased God upon a sudden to take off that *Queen*, and put such an end to their Dangers as nothing else could have done.

But though by this means therefore we were secured against their open Violence, yet *God* still permitted them to endeavour, by secret Treachery, to carry on their Designs against us: And has by that means furnish'd us with yet more Engagements to rely upon his Protection; who has so often, and wonderfully, delivered us from their Devices.

Witness the many subtle and barbarous ^m Attempts that were made by them upon the Life of *Queen Elizabeth*: The open Force, and domestic Disturbances which they raised up against her. And yet in all these they miscarry'd; and in many of them so signally, as plainly shew'd the Hand of God was against them.

When that *Queen* was gone, and *Kingⁿ James* settled upon the throne, it was but a little while before they return'd to their old Malice, but in a new Way; and that such as all the cunning of Hell had never before contrived, I mean that of the *Gun-Powder Conspiracy*. But that too was discovered after a most wonderful manner, and

^m See Foulis's *Popish Treasons*, l. vi. c. 4. l. vii. c. 3. ad finem.
ⁿ See Foulis, ib. l. x. c. 2.

at a most critical Juncture, when all was just come to the Point of Execution.

I might add to these Examples, the happy *Restoration* of our *Church* and *Government*, after the fatal Murder of *King Charles I.* Their frequent disappointments since; but especially that of the *last Reign.* But I think I have already given you Instances enough to convince you, that were we now left in as bad an *Estate*, as blessed be God! we are in a very *Good One*; yet still whilst we *hold firm* to our *Holy Religion*, and continue our *Trust* in *God*, there would be no cause for us to despond: Seeing *God* can defend us without any *Humane Help*; and, as I have now shewn you, has often done it, when we *could* have been *protected* by *None* but *Him*.

And this brings me to the next thing I have to observe from the foregoing Discourse; and that is,

Fifthly; That we should therefore be sure *never* to depart from our *Trust* in *God*, and then we may be confident we shall not be *forsaken* by *Him*. For *God* loves to be depended upon; and has seldom been known to *fail those* who have constantly *stuck* to *Him*.

A notable *Example* of which we have in the *History* of the present *Psalms*, and which the *Ancients* tell us was this.

When *Cyrus* had given leave to the *Jews* to return to *Jerusalem*, and to rebuild their *Temple*, and restore the worship of *God* in it; the *Samaritans*, a sort of mix'd People, *Half Jews*, and
Half

Half Idolaters°, so wrought with their Adversaries, that little was done in it, notwithstanding all the favour that was shewn them by that great *Monarch*.

No sooner was *Cyrus* gone, and *Cambyfes* placed upon his Throne; but all hope seemed utterly lost to them, of either restoring their *Temple*, or regaining any part of that Liberty they had before been encouraged to expect.

But what then was their Behaviour on this occasion? Did they *distrust* God; and give way to such Fears as the Insolence of their Enemies, and their own Circumstances, did indeed but too much expose them to? On the contrary, it was at this very juncture of Time, that those two great Prophets, *Haggai* and *Zechariah*, composed the *Psalms* we have now before us; and exhorted the People not to consider the ill-prospect which, according to Humane Appearance, their affairs were in; but to *trust* in God, who whenever he pleas'd, could turn all things to their advantage, and no doubt in his due time would do so.

And what was the Issue of this excellent Advice? Why in a very few Years *Cambyfes* died, and *Darius* came to the Throne; and in despite of all that either their *Half Brethren*, or their *Open Enemies*, could do to hinder it, so encouraged the Work, that both their *Temple*, and their *City*, were Re-built; and themselves restor'd both to their *Liberty*, and to their *Religion*.

° 2 Kings xxii. 28, 29, 41.

P So the lxx and Syriac, and other ancient Versions, in the Title of this Psalm.

And if to *Trust* in God be able to work such wonderful Effects as these; how much more may we promise our selves from it, who have so fair a prospect before our eyes; if we do but firmly *rely* upon *Him*, and not suffer any thing to *shake* our confidence of his *Mercy*?

But then, *Sixthly*; and to close all: That our *Hope* may be sure to have its due effect, let me add finally; that we must not think it enough barely to *trust* in God; but must take care with-all to *live* so, that we may be in some measure *worthy* of his *Protection*. We must to the *Purity* of our *Religion*, add the *Reformation* of our *Manners*; and then we may securely defy our greatest Enemies to do us any Mischief.

And because *Examples* in these Cases, are not only more instructive than Precepts, but more apt to persuade too; and that this is all that now remains to us of that noble Pattern, which was wont to shine so brightly in all our Eyes; to reflect upon her Piety, and by that to learn how to improve our own: I will conclude all with a few Remembrances of what our late blessed *Sovereign* did, to shew you what we ought to do. And,

First, Since *Good-Nature* is, I think, by all allowed to be one of the best Preparations to the *Divine Grace*; I shall in the first observe it as a singular part of the Felicity of *Her Sacred Majesty*, that she enjoy'd all that is properly understood by that phrase, in as high a perfection, as, it may be, any Person in the World ever did.

Her

Her *Temper* was naturally sweet and chearful; easy to her self, and acceptable to all others. And if that old Rule of the *Jews* be true, That the *Holy Ghost* loves to dwell in a quiet and comfortable Breast^a; I may be bold to say that her Soul was always in a disposition for that *blessed Spirit* to descend upon it, and to abide in it.

To improve this excellent *Temper*, she had a greatness and generosity of Mind, equal to her Rank and Quality: Free from Jealousies and Suspicions, as she was from Fear of any. In a word, clear of all those Passions which agitate *lesser Souls*, and keep them in a continual hurry and distraction.

Thus was she prepared by *Nature* for that extraordinary progress which she afterwards made in *Christian Piety* and *Virtue*. And as St. *Luke* tells us of those, to whom St. [†]*Paul* preached the *Gospel* heretofore; That *as many as were ordain'd to Eternal Life, believed*; that is, such as were in their Tempers and Dispositions, fitted and qualified for the reception of what he deliver'd to them: So may it no less truly be said of *Her Sacred Majesty* that she was, in like manner, *ordained to Eternal Life*; and therefore made such vast attainments in all those *Graces* that were necessary to bring her to it.

But, *Secondly*; To this first Advantage, it pleased *God* to add as great an eminence of what we usually call *good Parts*, as I believe has ever been

^a Vid. R. D. Kimchi, in 1 Sam. x. 5. and 2 Kings iii. 14, 15.

[†] Acts xiii. 48.

known in any of her Sex. Her *Apprehension* was *quick* and *piercing*; her *Judgment* *deep* and *correct*: Nor could any thing almost be proposed to her, but she was presently ready with all clearness to receive it, and with no less accuracy to pronounce, and determine, concerning it.

And when such was her *Capacity*, it is not to be wonder'd if she soon came to a right apprehension of the Design and End of Christianity: And was thoroughly convinced of the mighty concern which there lay upon her, to live in an exact obedience to its Commands.

But this was not all the advantage she had in this respect: For though her *Parts* were such, as would, with a very moderate exercise, have carried her into a perfect Knowledge of her Religion; yet she did not rely upon them: But to her natural Abilities, added such a care and diligence, to improve her Understanding, and to enflame her Affections, in all such things as seemed any way to referr to it; as few in a lesser Station have ever done.

To pass by her constant *attendance* upon the *publick Service* of God, and those Opportunities of Instruction which she had provided for, on all the more solemn returns of it. To say nothing of her frequent and useful *Conversation* with those who ministred unto her in *holy Offices*: What a large proportion of her Time did she every day spend in her own *private Retirements*? And of which no Business, no Ceremonies, much less any
vain

vain Pleasures, or Avocations, could ever deprive her.

What vast numbers of excellent Books did she there read? And that not lightly, or superficially, but with the severest Care and Reflection? And how cautious was she, if any Difficulty chanced to arise to her in her reading, which she, could not presently resolve to her own satisfaction, to call in some of those who attended on her, to clear it to her?

Nor did she in her *reading* run lightly off from Book to Book; the common method of empty and unsettled Minds; tho' she read over a great many. But when she met with any Discourse that seem'd particularly to affect her, or otherwise to come up in any peculiar manner to her own circumstances; she stuck closely to it: And by so doing evidently shew'd, that Piety and Instruction were indeed the ends she aim'd at in this Exercise: That she read for Profit, not for Curiosity; and sought for Use, not Diversion, in it.

Such was her care to get Instruction: And the same excellent disposition that moved her thus diligently to inform her self in all the parts of her Duty, engaged her yet more, *Thirdly*, To desire with all imaginable sincerity to be made acquainted with the *true*, and *genuine Measures*, of it.

It is the folly of many, but especially of great Persons, that they cannot endure correction; nor will bear to have the Truth spoken freely to them, in such Instances as are contrary to their

own carnal Desires and Affections. And therefore it is that they seldom know either Themselves, or their Duty; either what they ought to do, or what their State and Condition is, with relation thereunto.

But this was not the Case of that admirable Person of whom we are now speaking: She knew how dangerous an Instrument of the Devil *Flattery* is, and how fatally her Station exposed her to it: And she took care for nothing more than to secure her self against the danger of it.

I shall never forget with what weight of Reason, and sincerity of Concern, I have sometimes heard this great *Queen* represent the danger which *Princes*, above all others, are apt to run in this respect. And with what earnestness she has exhorted those about her, to deliver to her the plainest Truths; and with all freedom to tell her if they had observed any thing amiss in her Conduct, that she might amend it.

O wonderful Condescension! A sincerity of Piety beyond exception! And that in a place where there are usually but too many Temptations to Pride, and Self-Opinion: And it must therefore be an argument of a more than ordinary Wisdom and Integrity, to be able to withstand the force of them.

But yet still all this is only the Preparatory, tho' indeed a very good one, to that which I am especially to observe to you, and that is, *Fourthly*, Her sincere *Piety* and *Religion*. And for that, give me leave to say thus much; that if a
constant

constant Attendance upon all the Offices of Devotion both in publick and private: If such a Behaviour at them, as shew'd her Soul to be wholly fix'd on what she was about; and was enough to have rais'd a spirit of Piety in all that beheld her: If the Influences of this Devotion upon her whole Life and Conversation, and those so eminent as to speak her not only good, but excellent; an ornament to the Court, and an Honour to her Religion: If all this may suffice to shew a Mind wholly consecrated to the Service of God, and the discharge of her Duty; then was the Soul of this blessed Princess unquestionably so; and that, for ought I know, beyond any that at this day remains behind her.

But for the clearness of her Conscience in the discharge of her Duty, besides what we saw, and admired in her; two Arguments there are that may especially be offered, and I think ought not to be pass'd by. *First*; That while she liv'd she was always easy in her own Mind; which since it could not proceed either from any ignorance of her Duty, or unconcernedness for it; we must conclude it did arise from a full persuasion, that she lived according the tenour of it. And, *Secondly*; That when she came within the prospect of *Death*, and knew how near she was to it, she still appeared unconcern'd at it. And thereby gave a final evidence that she accounted her self prepared for it, and therefore was not afraid of it.

I should too far exceed the Bounds I am here confined to; should I enter upon the consideration of those *particular Virtues*, which seemed to shine in a more especial Manner, above all others, in her. But two there are which I must not overlook; and those are, her true *Humility*, amidst all the Temptations of a Court and Crown to the contrary; and her extensive *Charity*, such as sometimes deprived her even of the means of exercising of it; and might have abundantly satisfied any Mind but hers, who knew no end of *doing Good*; but has, after all, been seen sometimes, even with tears, to regret, that she could do no more.

But I must restrain my self; and set some bounds to my reflections, tho' my Subject is beyond any: And, for the rest, content my self with satisfaction to remember, what I was wont with wonder to behold.

And, Oh! That it would please God that both you and I might so effectually meditate upon these things, as to form our Lives according to her Example! And become now the Disciples of our great Queen, as we have hitherto been her Subjects!

This will be the best Offering we can pay to her memory, who while there is any sense of Goodness remaining amongst us, must never be mentioned without Honour. This is that improvement of our great loss, which our Religion expects from us; what our Souls call for; and what,

what, if she has yet any knowledge of what is done here below, our *Royal Sovereign* will, above all things, be the best pleased withall.

And if we thus improve the memory of her Virtues, we shall be even gainers by her departure. Such a demonstration of our Love and Honour to our *Royal Mistress*, will do more to establish our Tranquillity^s, than any Humane Conduct or Prudence, could have done without it. It will engage *God* on our side: And, if *God be for us*, we need not fear *who can be against us*^t.

Let us then, as we have now paid our just Sorrow to the loss of this *blessed Saint*, so from henceforth resolve to make this farther improvement of it. Let us thank *God*, that tho' he has removed one great *Supporter* from us, he has yet left us another; and, our present circumstances consider'd, the more necessary one to us, in the Person of *his sacred Majesty*.

Let us strengthen his Hands, both by our *Piety* towards *God*; and by our *Duty* to *him*: By uniting now all that *Affection* and *Obedience* in *Him alone*, which we before paid to both their *Majesties*.

Let us consider his *Courage*; and as far as either *Piety*, or *Prudence*, will allow us, let us *Trust* in his *Fortune*: That is to say, as far as any *humane Help* may be *trusted* in.

^s Dan. iv. 27.

^t Rom. viii. 31.

But yet still let us remember, that our *last Dependence* must be upon *God*: Who as he has *hitherto preserv'd* us, so will he still *go on to save* and *defend* us; if we do but *firmly adhere* to him, and *prepare* our selves for his *favour*, as our *Duty requires*; and as I have now shewn you, in a most *illustrious Example*, we may, and *ought, to do it*.



S E R M O N VIII.

Preached at

*St. James's Westminster,**April 16, 1696.*

Being the Day of publick Thanksgiving,
for the preservation of his Majesty's
Person from the late horrid and bar-
barous *Conspiracy*; and for delivering
this Kingdom from the danger and
miseries of a *French Invasion*.

P S A L M xxviii. 7.

*The LORD is my Strength and my
Shield; my Heart trusted in Him, and
I am helped: Therefore my Heart great-
ly rejoiceth, and with my Song will I
praise Him.*



HO' it be difficult to say what the
particular *Occasion* was which moved
the *Royal Psalmist* to compose this
Psalms; yet there is more than e-

nough in the very *Subject* of it to shew, how suitable it is to that great *Deliverance* which we are now assembled to offer up our *Thanksgivings* unto God for.

If *First*, We consider the *Author* of it; the *Inscription* will tell us that it is a *Psalm* of *David*. And if we look to the *Character* which he attributes to himself in the *Words* following the *Text*; we shall find, that when he composed it, he was *King of Israel*; and designed it as an *acknowledgment* to God for some *signal Favour* which he had received from him, *after* his *advancement* to that *high Dignity*.

If *Secondly*, We enquire into the *Subject* of it; it is evident from the whole *Series* of the *Psalm*, that it was intended for a *Thanksgiving* to God for some *eminent Deliverance* which he had vouchsafed to him. For this he *praises God* in the *Verse* before the *Text*: *Blessed be the LORD, because he hath heard the Voice of my Supplications*. And in the *Words* of it, declares the *joyful Sense* he had of his own *Preservation*: *The LORD is my Strength and my Shield; my Heart trusted in Him and I am helped; therefore my Heart greatly rejoiceth, and with my Song will I praise Him*.

But this is not yet all: For, *Thirdly*; If we look to the *Circumstances* of that *Deliverance*, we shall find it to be still more *agreeable* to the *Occasion* of our own *Thanksgiving*.

For (1st.) The *danger* to which the *Psalmist* was exposed, was not only a *Design* against his *Person*,

Person, but such as extended to his very *Life*. He had *cruel* and *merciless* Men to deal with; and had not God seasonably interposed his hand, he had fallen a *Sacrifice* to their *Rage* and *Malice*.

So the first *Verse* of this *Psalms* tells us; unto Thee will I cry O LORD my Rock, be not silent to Me; lest if Thou be silent, I become like Them that go down into the Pit. And in the *Psalms* immediately foregoing; and composed, about the same time; and, as is reasonably conjectured, upon the same Occasion with this before us; he represents his Adversaries as so many savage Beasts, that had designed to tear him in Pieces, and to glut themselves with his Blood: *Y. 2. When mine Enemies, and my Foes, came upon Me to eat up my Flesh, they stumbled and fell.*

(2^{dly}.) The Persons who had conspired against Him, were a sort of *merciless* and *bloody* Men: They were as *false* and *treacherous*, as they were *barbarous* and *cruel*. They spoke him fair, at the same time that they had resolved to stab him to the Heart. They had long endeavour'd by *Calumny* and *Misrepresentation*, to alienate the Affections of his People from him: And when they saw that this would not do, they resolved, at once, to make an end of him.

And for this we have, again, the *Psalms*ist's own Words, in both these *Psalms*; who therefore upon this very account Prays to God against them: *Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of Iniquity; who speak peace*
to

to their Neighbours, but mischief is in their Hearts. Deliver me not over unto the will of mine Enemies; for false Witnesses are risen up against Me, and such as breath out cruelty.

But (3^{dly}.) Tho' the Design of these barbarous Men, was chiefly against the Person of King David, yet it did not stop there. No; They resolved to extend their Malice to all that adhered to him: And not to leave, till they had completed their Vengeance in the utter ruin both of the One, and of the Other.

It was this gave occasion to that Conjunction we meet with both of his, and their Deliverance, *Psalm* 8. The LORD is their Strength; and he is the saving Strength of his anointed. And drew from him that Prayer with which he concludes this *Psalm*; *Psalm* 9. Save thy People, and bless thine Inheritance; feed them also, and lift them up for ever.

And as such was their Design against David, and his Followers; so if we enquire (4^{thly}.) What may have been the Cause of so inveterate a Malice against both, we shall be able to give no other account of it than this; that God had wonderfully raised up the One to the Throne of Judah, and the Other thought themselves obliged in Conscience to submit to him, and to support his Authority.

This is what the *Psalmist* again declares to us, in the fourth, and fifth, Verses of this *Psalm*:

• *Psalm* xxviii. 3. Ib. xxvii. 12.

Where he (for this very reason) either *fore-tells*, or *prays* for, their *Disappointment*: Give them according to their *Deeds*, and according to the wickedness of their *Endeavours*; give them after the work of their *Hands*; render to them their *Desert*: — Because they regard not the *Works of the LORD*, nor the *Operation of his Hands*: That is to say, those evident marks of God's singular *Providence*, which were so plainly to be seen, in his raising him up to be *King of Israel*.

In the *Words* before us, there are these four Things to be considered:

I. The *Deliverance* it self for which *David*, in this place, *blesse*s God; *I am helped*.

II. The *Author* of his *Deliverance*; It was the *LORD*.

III. The *Motive* which induced God to deliver him: The *LORD* was his *Strength*, and his *Shield*; his *Heart* trusted in him, and therefore, he was helped.

IV. And lastly, The *Return* which the royal *Psalmist* made to God for his *Deliverance*: Therefore, says he, my *Heart* greatly rejoiceth, and with my *Song* will I praise him.

These are the several *Parts* which my *Subject* leads me to consider: And I shall do it all along, first, but very briefly, as they relate to King *David*, and his *People*; and then, more fully, as they may be applied to our own royal *Sovereign*;
and

and to that wonderful *Deliverance* God has been pleased to afford us out of the *Hands of our Enemies*.

And Ist. Let us consider the *Deliverance* itself, which is to be the *Subject* of our *present Thanksgiving*; *I am helped*.

What the *particular Blessing* was to which *David* here refers, we cannot tell: But as the whole *Tenor* of this *Psalms* assures us, that it was some very *signal Danger* from which *God* had rescued him; so I have before observ'd, that the *Occasion* of it was owing to that *implacable Malice* which some few *wicked Men* had conceived against him for his being made *King of Israel*; notwithstanding the *visible Marks of God's Hand*, which appear'd in the whole *Progress* of that *Affair*.

It is, indeed, an astonishing thing to consider, that after *so many*, and such *plain Assurances*, as *God* had given of his *Pleasure* in this particular; yet still such numbers should continue not only not to *regard his Work*, but even to bid *defiance* to his *Providence*; and to set themselves up against *One*, whom they could not but see, *he was resolved to exalt*.

That *Samuel* was a *true Prophet*, and appointed by *God* to deliver his will to that *People*; none among them ever doubted. He was the *Person* whom *God* employed to introduce the

^b 1 Sam. viii, &c.

Kingly Government among them: And it was upon his Credit, that ^c *Saul* himself was received by them for their *King*. And yet it was this same ^d *Samuel* that publish'd God's Decree for taking the *Crown* from *Saul*; and that so *openly*, and in such a *solemn manner*, that it was not possible for any among them to have been ignorant of it.

Nay, but this was not all: *Samuel* not only made known to them the *Decree* of God concerning *Saul*; but shew'd them the very ^e *Person* whom God had *chosen* to rule over them in his stead. He *anointed* him, for this very end, in *Bethlehem*; and commanded the *Jews* to look upon him, and *receive* him as their *King*.

This was so notorious, that even ^f *Saul* himself knew of it: And *Jonathan*, *Saul's* Son, and *Heir* apparent to the *Crown*, both knew the same thing, and *consented* to it; and used his utmost *endeavour* to promote the *Will* of God in it.

And now, when all this was so plain, as I have here represented it to you, and as you all know that it was; who could have imagined, that there should ever have risen any doubt, whether the *Jews* were to stick to the House of *Saul*; or to lay that aside, and without any more ado submit to *David* as their *King*? Yet so we see it proved: For ^g *Abner*, *Saul's* General, no sooner saw that his Master was *slain*, but he took *Ish-bosheth* his Son, and made him *King* in his stead; and

^c 1 Sam. x. 12.

^d 1 Sam. xv. 10, &c.

^e 1 Sam. xvi. 13.

^f 1 Sam. xx. 31. xxiv. 20. xxiii. 17.

^g 2 Sam. ii. 8, &c.

eleven of the twelve *Tribes of Israel* acknowledged his *Authority*.

It would be too long a Story to recount to you, what unhappy *Divisions* this threw that *People* into; and through what a multitude of *Dangers* *God* at last brought his *anointed* to the full Possession of that *Power* which he had allotted to him. I shall only observe, that so *generous*, as well as *innocent*, was the Conduct of *holy David* in the whole course of this Affair; as shew'd him to have *deserved* the *Crown*, tho' *God* had not bestow'd it, in so singular a Manner, upon him. Tho' ^h *Saul* several times endeavour'd, by the foulest means, to destroy him; and *God*, (as if it had been on purpose that he might make him a *Retaliation*) twice put ⁱ *Saul* himself into his hands; yet this brave *Prince* scorn'd to take the advantage of him; nor would consent that any of his *Party* should touch him. And when, (tired out with the *Confusions* they had lain under, and convinced of the *Will of God* to set *David* upon the *Throne*) two of the chief *Officers* of his *Army* treacherously slew ^k *Ish-bosheth* their *Master*, and brought his *Head* to *King David*; that excellent Man did not only not shew any *favour* to *them*; but as he had before done to the *Amalekite*, who slew ^l *Saul*, (tho' at his own desire, and meerly to keep his *Enemies* from doing of it,) he punish'd them according to their *Desert*: He cut off their ^m *Hands* and their *Feet*, and hang'd

^h 1 Sam. xviii. 10, 25. ⁱ xix. 11, &c.

^k 2 Sam. iv. 6.

^l 2 Sam. i. 15.

ⁱ 1 Sam. xxiv. xxvi.

^m Ib. iv. 12.

them

them up in *Hebron*; and gave an honourable Burial to the *Head* of that unfortunate *Prince*, whom they had so *basely* and *barbarously* murder'd.

But tho' God had therefore in *so* eminent a manner set *David* upon the *Throne*, and *David* himself had appear'd, in all respects, so worthy of that *Dignity*: Tho' never any *Prince* more generously exposed himself for the *Publick Safety*, or came off with greater *Honour*, or put things into a better posture, than he did that *Country*; yet was not all this sufficient to quiet the *Minds*, and to reconcile the *Affections* of some *perverse Tempers* to him: But they were still ready upon every occasion to assault his *Person*; and to do, what in them lay, to subvert his *Authority*. An *Obstinacy* as great, as it was groundless: And which may be a sufficient demonstration to us, that some *Mens Resentments*, are not only without *Bounds*, but beyond *Conviction*: And that we ought not to wonder if no *rational Considerations* can take place with those, whose *Passions* and *Prejudices* are so violent and infatuating, that we see a *Prophet* could not; and, it may almost be question'd, whether an *Angel* from *Heaven* would have been able to persuade them.

Such was the Case of the *Jews* heretofore; and I would to God, I had no cause to say, that the same is our Case at this very Day. But what then means our *solemn Assembling* at this time? Why are we here met together to bless God for the *Preservation* of our royal *Sovereign*, if neither

ther his *Person* was in *danger*, nor his *Authority* invaded?

To recount the several Steps by which it pleased God to bring our *David* to his *Throne*; and shew you what just reason an *injured* People had to look to themselves, and not suffer their *Liberties* to be *subverted*, and their *Religion* *destroy'd*, without taking any due Care to preserve either; would divert me too far from the Subject before me, to which alone I desire now to apply my self. I shall therefore only say thus much as to this Matter; that if *ever* it may be *lawful* for any *People* to provide for their *own Safety*: If the *Constitution* of a *limited Monarchy* be not a *meer Notion*, that has neither *Meaning*, nor *Priviledge*, in it: If a *Nation* govern'd by *Laws* of its *own Approving*, and that never engaged to *obey* any *Sovereign* but what mutually *obliged himself* to *rule* according to those *Laws*; has as *just a right* to the *legal Government* of the *Prince*, as the *Prince* has to the *legal Obedience* of such a *People*: In short, if it be absurd to say that a whole *Kingdom* may have a *right* to its *Laws* and *Liberties*, and yet have *no right* to *defend* them, tho' they should never so *apparently*, or in such *considerable Instances*, be *broken* in upon; tho' such things should be enterprized as all Men must see were *designed*, and if not prevented must *end* in a total *Dissolution* of the *Constitution*: Then had *this Kingdom* also reason to stand up in defence of its *Laws*, and its *Religion*, establish'd by those *Laws*; and to lay hold on the happy
Opportunity

opportunity of the *Desertion* of a *King*, who was resolved rather not to *Rule* at all, than not to *Rule* in his own way.

Whether this were our Case, as to *Matter of Fact*; whether our *Constitution* was really in danger of being *subverted*, and our *Religion*, *Laws*, and *Liberties*, were *invaded*; this must be left to every ones own *Conscience* to judge of. But if they were; and if our *Monarchy* be, in the very *Frame* and *Constitution* of it, a *limited Monarchy*; establish'd not upon the *Imperial Laws* of a few *visionary Politicians*, but upon the *Fundamental Laws* of its own making or allowing: Then I must solemnly profess that either I am incapable of judging what *Sense* and *Reason* is; or it must follow, that an *absolute Monarch*, a *Prince* not bounded by *Law*, but governing only by the *arbitrary Motions* of his own *Will*, is no *King* of our acknowledging; our *Constitution* knows no such *Monarch*, nor did we ever oblige our selves to obey such a one.

And now having thus truly shewn you how our Case stood when it pleased God to send our *royal Deliverer* to us, I shall need say very little to convince you, that he did not come without a *particular Providence* attending him in the whole Course of our *Deliverance*. And tho' *Success* when it stands without any other *Support*, much more if it be *contrary* to *Justice* and *Equity*, is but a very bad *Argument* of the *Divine Approbation*; because God may permit what he does not allow of: Yet where a whole *Kingdom* is

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manifestly injured, Oaths are broken, Laws despised; where the Religion of a Nation is endeavoured to be subverted, and a free People to be subjected to the intolerable Yoke of an arbitrary Power, and an idolatrous Worship; and God visibly appears on their behalf, in such extraordinary instances of his Providence as scarce any Age can parallel; It must be *Obstinacy*, and *Perverseness*, not to see that his Arm has brought *Salvation* unto them; or seeing it, not to be persuaded, with all *thankfulness*, to accept of it.

For not to say any thing of those many *Deliverances* we have heretofore assembled to bless God for: How great was the *Mercy* that saved us from our *present danger*? How evident was the *hand of God* in every *Circumstance* of it?

That Men, neither the most *Pious*, nor most *Compassionate* of any in the World; *Enemies* to our Religion, and (if it were possible) somewhat worse than *Enemies* to our present Government; should yet be so struck with the *regret* of an *Enterprize* which alone could give them any just *hopes* of succeeding in their *Designs* against us, as to become themselves the *Discoverers* of their own *wicked Undertakings*; is certainly very *strange*; and what can hardly be accounted for, without *acknowledging* some *extraordinary Impulse* of *Conscience* in it.

That having *discovered* it; Those who *suffer'd* for it, and whose *concern* for their own *Reputation*, if not for the *common Cause*, one would think, should have prompted them to leave the
Credit

Credit of such an *Attempt* as much in doubt as was possible; should joyn their own *Testimony*, to the *witness* that had before been given of the *Truth* of it; this is yet more *wonderful*: And what neither the *Principles*, nor *Politicks*, of the *Church of Rome*, usually allow their *Profelytes* to do.

That to strengthen both the *Witness* of *Some*, and the *Confessions* of *Others*, as to this matter; so many foreign *Proofs* should be sent us from *all Parts* abroad; and shew that to have been published beforehand almost to *all Europe*, which ought, if possible, to have been concealed even from those who were to be the *Actors* in it; this must be the effect of a more than ordinary *Infatuation*; and cannot be reconciled to the *usual Caution*, and *Closeness* of those, who were the great *Contrivers* and *Abettors* of it.

In short; That when such a *Time* was taken to *invade* us from Abroad, as (had our own *Measures* succeeded) we must have been left utterly destitute of any possibility either of *preventing* or *opposing* it at Home; He who governs the *Wind* and the *Sea*, should so order matters that it was not possible for us to send away those *Ships* on which our *Safety* was to depend: This is, above all the rest, an evident instance of *God's favour* to us; and ought to be as *wonderful* in our *Eyes*, as it has been *astonishing* in those of our *Enemies*.

So plainly was *God* pleased to shew Himself on our side, in every Circumstance of this *Deliverance*.

rance. And that we may the better know what returns we ought to make for it, give me leave to offer you a very few *Observations* with reference thereunto.

And, 1st. If we consider only that part of the design which was the first to have been put in execution, God has prevented the *Murder* of our *King*; of that *King* whom *He* had chosen to be the *Instrument* of our *Preservation*; and in whose safety our very *Enemies* themselves account our *Welfare* to consist. And God forbid! we should have a less esteem of our *Royal Sovereign*, than those who the most hate him, shew us that they have.

2^{dly}. This *Murder* was to have been follow'd with a *Foreign Invasion*: An *Invasion* from that *Prince*, who has already fill'd most of the other parts of *Europe* with *Ruin* and *Desolation*. And particularly, has shewn himself so irreconcilable an *Enemy* to the *Protestant Religion*, as to be resolved (if it were possible) to root out the very memory of it from off the Earth.

And here then let us consider, what a *Confusion*, and *Desolation*, this must have put our *unfortunate Country* into? When we should have seen, our *Houses* in *Flames* about our *Ears*; our *Land* destroy'd; our *Friends*, and *Relations*, slaughter'd before our *Eyes*: The *best*, and *greatest* of our *Nation*; those from whose *Courage* or *Conduct*; from whose *Counsel* or *Interest*, we might have especially hoped for Help, secretly cut off, in the very beginning of our *disorders*. In short,

when our *Land* being become a *Seat of War*; we should have *beheld*, and *suffer'd*, all those *Miseries*, and *Calamities*, which we tremble to hear of, tho' at the greatest distance from us.

Oh! How happy would those have been, who should have had the *priviledge* of being *first destroyed*; rather than to have outlived the *fortunes* of their *Country*, their *own Peace*, and their *Churches Establishment*. But, blessed be God! who has graciously *deliver'd* us out of their *Hands*; and thereby given us a new earnest of his *favour* to us: And manifested to the World, that in vain are all the *Counsels of Men* to *destroy* those, whom He has resolved to *Help* and *Support*.

And thus have I shewn you, not only what our *Deliverance* is; but withal, which was my

II^d Point; To *whom* we are to *ascribe* the *Glo-*
ry of it.

For tho' God be, indeed, the *Sovereign Dispenser* of all our *Fortunes*; and, as such, must be recurr'd to as the *final Author* of whatsoever *Good* we enjoy: Yet in some *Cases* He is pleased in a more particular manner to *discover* his *hand* in the *Blessings* which we receive from Him; and therefore ought in a *singular manner* to be look'd unto as the *Donor* of them.

So he did in *David's deliverance*; and so he did in our late *Preservation*. It was neither our *Hand*, nor our own *Counsel*, that *saved* us: Neither the *strength* of our *Armies*, nor the *cunning*

of our wise Men, the Rulers and Guides of our *Israel*, that *disappointed* the *designs* of our *Enemies* against us. But it was the *Arm* of the *LORD* that *defended* us: *He was our Strength, and our Shield*; and therefore *we were helped*.

Which being so let us go on,

III^{dly}. To consider, what it was that induced *God* to *deliver David* heretofore; and for which we may justly presume he was pleased, in so wonderful a manner, to *preserve* us now: *My heart trusted in Him*, says he, *and I am helped*.

There is nothing more frequently taken notice of by the *Royal Psalmist*, throughout this whole *book*, than this one thing; that he was therefore *so often*, and in *so signal a manner*, *protected* by *God*, because he *put his trust in Him*.

It is upon this ground that he sometimes *prays* to *God* for help: *Psal. vii. 1. O Lord my God! in Thee do I put my trust; save me from all Them that Persecute Me, and Deliver Me.* And again, *Psal. xv. 2. O my God! I trust in Thee, let me not be ashamed, neither let mine Enemies triumph over me.*

And when *God* heard his *Prayer*, and *preserved* him from his *Enemies*; it is to this that he ascribes his doing of it: *I have trusted in the LORD, therefore I shall not slide*, *Psal. xxvi. 1.* And again, *Psal. xxi. 7. The King trusteth in the LORD; and thro' the mercy of the most High, He shall not be moved.*

It is this that he recommends to all others, as the best means they could use to secure to themselves the *favour of God*, and the *protection of his good Providence*. *Trust in the LORD*, says he, *and do good; so shalt Thou dwell in the Landⁿ*. *They that trust in the LORD shall be even as Mount Zion, which may not be removed, but standeth fast for ever^o*.

And, lastly, not to mention any more particulars; it is this that makes him speak so often of *God*, as the particular *Defender of such Persons*: *The LORD*, says he, *redeemeth the Souls of his Servants; and none of them that trust in him shall be destitute*, Psal. xxxiv. 22. And again, Psal. xviii. 30. *He is a Buckler to all Those that trust in Him*.

Now this being the result of such a *trust*, even with respect to our *present Welfare*; it cannot but be a Matter of great consequence to us to know, wherein the *Nature of this Trust* do's consist; and How we may intitle our selves to the *Benefits of it*?

And here, 1st. I must observe, that we ought not so far to mistake either our *Duty*, or our *Interest*, as to imagine that because we are commanded to *Trust in God*, therefore we must take no farther *Care of*, nor make any suitable *Provision* for, the *success of our Affairs*.

This would be not so much to *Trust in God*, as to *Presume upon Him*: To expect that He

ⁿ Psal. xxxvii. 3.

^o Ib. cxxv. 1.

should *work Miracles* for our sakes; and do *All* to *save* those, who will do *Nothing* to *save* themselves. On the contrary we see how even *David* himself, amidst all his *trust* in *God's Help*, yet still took care to make the best *provision* He could for his *own Safety*. And when the *Israelites* before were sent by his own *peculiar Commission*, to *kill*, and to *take possession*; and were *assured of Victory*, before they went into the *Field*: Yet still they were required to *act* with as much *Art*, and *Cunning*; to *contrive* as *wisely*, and to *fight* as *resolutely*, as if the whole *Success* of their *Enterprizes* were to have depended upon their own *Courage* and *Conduct*.

And so must we do now: *God* has, 'tis true, in a wonderful manner, *deliver'd* our *King*, and *discover'd* the *designs* of our *Enemies* against us. He has shewn us what *kind* of *Men* we have to *do with*; and from whence our *danger* is likely to *arise*. And it must be, in great measure, our own fault, if we do not *prevent* it. But yet, if because *God* has done thus much for us we shall from henceforth grow *Careless*, and *Secure*: If while our *Enemies* threaten us from abroad, and we are beset with a *discontented, designing Party* at home; we shall neither be careful to *discover* what their *Strength* is, nor to consider How to *fortify* our selves against *Them*; We must blame no body, but our selves, if we shall at last *fall* into their *Snares*, and *sink* under those *Attempts* we have now so narrowly escaped.

But

But 2^{dly}. Tho' we *may*, and *ought*, to use our best *Endeavours* to provide for our own *Security*, yet we must not place our *dependance* upon them; but when we have done all that we can, must still *look up* to *God* for *deliverance* and *success*. And this is truly to *Trust in him*; and will furnish us with a clear notion of the *Nature* of that great *duty* which is required of us on all these *Occasions*.

To provide for our *own safety*, and to take those measures that seem the most likely to promote the *publick Welfare*; this is not only very *Lawful*, but is *Reasonable*, and *Necessary*: Nor shall we ever be *secure* without doing of it. But yet, when all is done, 'tis neither our *Arms*, nor our *Counsels*; neither our *Strength*, nor our *Policy*, that we must *depend* upon; but we must still recur to *God* for *Help*, and put our whole *Trust*, and *Confidence*, in *his Mercy*.

So *David* did, and it was this that crown'd his *Enterprises* with *Honour*, and *Victory*. *I will not trust in my Bow*, says he; *neither shall my Sword save Me*. *Thro' thee will we push down our Enemies*; *thro' thy name will we tread them under, that rise up against us*, Psal. xlv. 5, 6. And in another *Psal*m, he makes this *wise*, and *pious Remark*, upon the different *Conduct* of his *Enemies*, as to this matter; and how it *succeeded* with them accordingly: Psal. xx. 7, 8. *Some trust in Chariots, and some in Horses; but we will remember the Name of the LORD our God.*

God. *They are brought down and fallen; but we are risen and stand upright.*

For men to look only to the *number* of their *Forces*; the *exactness* of their *Discipline*; and the *cunning* of their *Management*; and then boast of their *Enterprises* as *certain*, and *infallible*; and exalt themselves in their own *Imaginations*, as if no *disappointment* could happen to them: This is not only to shew too great a *contempt* of God's *Providence*, but too little a *reflection* upon the *state* of the *World*; and those numerous *Accidents* to which the *greatest*, and *wisest* *Undertakings*, are *exposed*. And I am pretty confident, our *Enemies* themselves begin, by this time, to be sensible of their *own Folly* in this particular: And to perceive how vain a thing it is to lay *great designs*, and *build up mighty expectations* upon them; and not consider all the while, that there is a *God* who *ruleth in the Kingdoms of Men*, and whose *Counsel*, when we have done all we can, *shall Stand*.

But above all, 3^{dly}. As we must not *trust* in our *own Strength*, or *Policy*, for *Success* and *Security*; so must we take heed not to engage in any *wicked Courses*, either to *promote* our *Interests*, or to *prevent* our *Danger*. For this will be plainly to *forsake God*; and to *trust* in our *own devices*, even in *defiance* of his *Ability*, to *controul* and *disappoint* us.

There is a certain *justice* to be observed even against an *Enemy*; and *War* its self has its *Laws*, from which the more upright *Heathens* thought it not only *evil*, but *scandalous*, to depart. Much more ought we *Christians* to do likewise. And tho' to a *weak Mind*, and a *brutish Policy*; it may appear a very wise method of proceeding to endeavour, by *secret treachery*, to cut off a dangerous *Enemy*; and do that by a *sudden stab*, or a *deadly draught*, which cannot without much hazard be accomplish'd in a *fair Engagement*: Yet there is a *God* above, who as He *abhors* himself, and has *taught* us to *detest* such *barbarous undertakings*; so does He for the most part bring them to nought: And leave the *projectors* only to the *regret* of having been *disappointed* in their *Designs*; and to the *hatred* and *contempt* of *Mankind*, for having ever *engaged* in them.

Thus *God* did do in the Case of *David*, whom *Saul* so often *endeavour'd*, and *hoped* to have *destroy'd*: And thus has he done for *our royal Sovereign*. He has deliver'd him from the *secret Practices*, as well as from the *open Violence*, of his *Enemies*: And continued him to be, as he is this day, a *living Monument* of his own *Mercy*; and of the *un-christian, un-manly* designs of those, who are *great* only in *Treachery* and *Deceit*: In endeavouring basely to *destroy those*, whom they never yet durst meet in the *Field of Honour*; nay, to whom they would rather tamely yield up, if they had it, the *Empire of the World*, than let the
Sword

Sword decide it between them, to whom it should belong.

And let them rejoice, if they please, in their *inglorious proceedings*. Let them raise *Armies*, and train up *forces*, not to fight, but to countenance the *treachery* of their *Proceedings*. Let them buy *Victory*; and Corrupt those whom they would be thought to *Engage*: And fancy, after all, that they are *Great* and *Honourable*; because they are able to command *Panegyric's*, and to reward the mercenary *Authors* of them. But *Posterity* will know the *baseness* of their *Proceedings*; and *God*, in a little time, will judge Them for them. In the mean while it will be our parts to *provide*, the best we can, against their *Wickedness*: And having so done let us not doubt but that *God* will turn their *Devices* to their own *Confusion*; and not suffer us to fall by them, whilst we continue to put our trust in Him.

And now, it remains only that I conclude all with the IVth and last *Point*, which I proposed to speak to, viz. The *Return* which the royal *Psalmist* made to *God* for his *Deliverance*; Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth, and in my Song will I praise him.

In which *Words* we have these two Things represented to us:

1st. The *inward Sense* which *David* had of *God's Mercy* to him: His Heart greatly rejoiced. And,

2^{dly}. His outward Expression of it; In my Song will I praise Him.

These two together made up the Return of that holy Man; and both of them must concur in our Thanksgiving; if ever we mean to render it pleasing and acceptable to God Almighty.

1st. We must entertain a worthy and grateful Sense of our Deliverance.

And this, one would think, every One should do, who is capable of understanding what it was; and from what a deluge of Miseries, we have reason to believe, we are freed by it.

Were the mischief, design'd against us, to have reach'd no farther than to the death of the King; yet sure we cannot have so soon forgot, how much we owe to Him, as not to account our selves, in an eminent manner, concern'd for his Preservation. He who in the time of our greatest Danger ventured his own Life, and Fortune, to secure Ours; and when our Enemies seem'd to be in their full Career, trampling both our Laws and Religion under their feet; swept forth into the Gap, and bravely withstood the Torrent, which would otherwise have born down all before it; as he must needs deserve our most grateful Acknowledgments for so seasonable an Interposition; so shall He, I hope, be always consider'd by us, as the Repairer of our Breaches; the Supporter of our State; the Defender of our Liberties; and the Preserver of the true Religion among us: In whose Safety, we therefore ought, as we do, most heartily to rejoice.

But

But this is not all: The very *danger* he was exposed to, was meerly for *our sakes*; and upon the account of that *Protection* which he continues to afford us against the *fury* of our *Enemies*. Nor would they ever have thought of *destroying* him, had he not been so *zealous* to *save* us.

The truth is, if we will consider the *design* of our *Enemies* aright; we must look upon our *solemn Rejoicing* at this time, to be not so much upon the account of our *royal Sovereigns Preservation*, as of our *common Deliverance*. Our *Country*; our *Families*; our *Estates*; nay our very *Lives* themselves; the *Constitution* of our *Monarchy*; the *Laws* by which we are *govern'd*; the *Religion* in which we *serve God now*, and thro' which we expect to be *saved* hereafter; *all these* were *struck at*: And had their *Attempt* succeeded, must all have fallen together with the great *Defender* of them. Nor can any one excuse himself from a *grateful resentment* of this *happy Deliverance*, without declaring himself thereby a *publick Enemy*: An *Enemy*, not only to his *Prince's Safety*; but to the *Peace*, the *Welfare*, nay to the very *Establishment* of the *Church*, and *Government*, under which we *live*.

We were appointed as *Sheep* for the *Slaughter*; our *Land* was to have been made an *Akeldama*, a *Field of Blood*: The *fury* of *War*, always very *dismal*, and no where more, than where the *French Tyranny* has the fortune to *prevail*; was to have been doubled upon us. Whilst we should have been exposed not only to the *Rage* of those abroad,
(and

(and who by the *Treatment* they have given their own Countrymen, have sufficiently shewn, what all others, of a *different Religion*, must expect from them;) but to the particular *resentments* of our own *Domestick Enemies*. Or to speak all in one Word; we should have been laid open to all the *Cruelty* that a *false Zeal*, and a *persecuting Church*, could *inspire* into the Minds of Men who would have set no *bounds* to their *Rage*; as they know no *measure* of their *Hatred*, and *Malice*, against us.

Oh! the *Horror* and *Confusion*, the *Shrieks* and the *Lamentations*, that would have been *seen*, and *heard*, in all our *Streets*! How often should we in vain have wish'd to die, rather than live to *behold* and *suffer* such *Evils*, as would before this time have come upon us? As the *Horror* of a *Shipwreck* at *Sea*, or of an *Earthquake* at *Land*; as a *City* taken by *Storm*; as if the *Day of Judgment* were coming upon the *Earth*; such would the *Case* of this *miserable Country* have been.

But; blessed be God! who has not given us over for a *Prey* unto their *Teeth*. ^aOur *Soul* is *escaped*, even as a *Bird* out of the *Snare* of the *Fowler*; the *Snare* is *broken*, and we are *delivered*. Nay, we are not only *saved* from our *present Danger*, but are, I hope, in some *measure* awakened to *provide* for our *future Safety*: And effectually convinced what *Cana-*

^a Psal. cxxiv. 6, 7.

anites we have among us; and how much it will concern us to *beware* of them.

And, I would to God, they did not give us every Day more and more reason so to do. For even since the *discovery* of this *horrid, barbarous, base Design*; where is almost the Man, that has given us any good Assurance of his *Abhorrence* of it? That he is *asham'd* of the *Undertaking*; that he *detests* those who were engaged in it: Or is indeed *concern'd* for any thing, unless it be for this one thing, that they *succeeded* no better in the *Execution* of it.

But such is the *power* of *Passion*, and *Prejudice*; and so *unaccountable* are the *workings* of some mens *Consciences*! For sure, otherwise, one would think it should be somewhat more than *Infatuation* to imagine, that to call in a *French Power* is a likely *method* to secure our *English Liberties*; or that those who have been so zealous to *root* out the *Protestant Interest* at *Home*, will yet be so *good natured* as to establish it *A-broad*.

I hope there is no one will so far mistake my design in insisting upon these Matters, as to think that I desire hereby to raise up any *Storm* against the *quiet*, and *conscientious* Part of those who differ from us, in point either of *Religion*, or *Government*. On the contrary, I freely profess, that I love, and value, a *sincere* and *upright Christian*, let his *Opinion* be never so *contrary* to what I take to be the *right*: And for the whole World I would not, willingly, be the occasion

casion of the *least Evil* to *such a one*. *Persecution* for *Matters of Opinion*, is what, I thank God, I have ever *abhorr'd*; and I hope I shall never be so far *transported* in my *Zeal* for any *Cause*, or *Party*, as to give the least encouragement to it.

But then I must beg leave to observe withal; that *true Religion*, is first *pure*, then *peaceable*; it is *humble*, and *charitable*; it *thinketh no Evil*, nor *wisbeth* any; it *rejoiceth* not in *Iniquity*; but desires the *Welfare*, and *Happiness* of those, who are at the greatest *distance* from its own *Perswasion*. And if instead of maintaining such a *Character*, Men will be *peevish* and *morose*; *turbulent* and *unquiet*: If they will not only shew an implacable *hatred* towards all such as differ from them, but will, upon every occasion, publicly *censure* and *revile* them: If they will *rejoice* in their *Harm*, and be *concern'd* at their *Welfare*; and resolve at any rate to *procure* their *destruction*, though they were sure to *perish* together with them: In short, if such be their *Conscience*, that they can without any remorse consent to have a *King murder'd*; their *Country invaded*; their *Religion* and *Liberties*, given up into the Hands of those who are the *profess'd Enemies* of both: I cannot but think, that then it is high time for us to look to *our selves*, and

^a Jam. iii. 17. Colof. iii. 12. 1 Cor. xiii. 5, 6.

to *have a care of such Zealots*; and to consider, the rather, how to *prevent our Ruin*, for that it is become a *matter of Conscience* with some Men, to do all they can to *destroy us*.

And now if, from what has been said, it appears, that our *Hearts* ought *greatly to rejoice* at this *Deliverance*; then I am sure I shall need add very little to persuade you, 2^{dly}. To let your *Tongues* declare the *Sense* of them. For the *Expressions* of the *Mouth*, naturally follow the *Disposition* of the *Mind*: And when the one is full of a *grateful Resentment* of *God's Mercies*; the other will break out, into *Songs of Praise* and *Thanksgiving* for them.

Now this we have, in some measure already done; and shall again go on, with the *Church*, to do. But we must not let our *Thanksgiving* stop here; nor think that the *acknowledgment* of one such *solemn Meeting*, is a *sufficient return* for so great a *Preservation*. Rather, we should teach our very *Children* to speak of this *Mercy*; and deliver the *Memory* of it down to *succeeding Generations*. That the *Ages* yet to come may know what a *Deliverance* we have *received*; as well as enjoy the *Benefits* of it. And by more and more *Instances* be convinced, how impossible it is to reconcile a *Popish Power*, to the *Interest* of a *Protestant Church and Kingdom*: And that they ought rather to *expose* themselves to any *Hazards*, and to *undergo* any *Burdens*, than be brought again under the *Toak* of it.

Thus

Thus then let us rejoice in the Blessing we have received, and thus let us speak of it in all our Gates. And may that God who regardeth the Heart, and knoweth the secret Thoughts of every one of us; approve our Sincerity, and accept of our Thanksgivings! And evermore preserve us, from the Treachery, and Violence of all our Enemies; but, especially from the Tyranny of the GREAT OPPRESSOR.

May he incline those to *consider and praise* him, who are yet to be convinced of the *justice of our Cause*, and the *happiness of our Deliverance*: Nay, who perhaps break in upon the *Solemnity of this Day*, with *murmurings*, and *repinings*, against God for *preserving us*.

And as for those who are true and *steady* to the *publick Interest* of their *Country*, and *Religion*; may he every day render them more *useful*, and *serviceable* to both! May they be *active* and *vigorous*; *firm* and *resolute*! Neither *afraid* to own a *good Cause*, though reviled by those who *wish ill* to it; nor unwilling to *venture themselves*, and *all they have*, for the *Support* of it.

May they to the *Sacrifices* of their *Lips*, add the *Piety* of their *Lives*: And by a *general Reformation* of *Manners*, and *Union* of *Hearts* and *Affections* among us; remove the only *Obstacles* that seem any way likely to prevent our *common Happiness*!

And having thus disposed our selves for *his Blessing*; may that *God* who has sent this great *Salvation* to us, multiply more and more his *Fa-*

vours upon us! May he *direct* our *Counsels*; *animate* our *Resolutions*; and *give success* to our *Undertakings*! But especially; may he preserve our *Royal Sovereign* from all the treacherous *designs* of his *Enemies* against him; and from the *hands* of those who *delight* in *Blood*! May his *Arms* be *prosperous*; and his *Reign* *happy*! May he *finish* all his *Enterprizes* with *Honour* and *Victory*: And may we consider more and more how much our *Safety* *depends* upon his *Welfare*; and with what *Zeal* we ought to *unite* together against *all* such, as by *seeking* his *Destruction*, shall give us the *highest*, and most *fatal Demonstration* that can be given, of their *desire* to promote our *common Ruin*.

I shall conclude all, with the *Words* of our *Royal Psalmist*, when God had given him *rest* from all his *Enemies*, and had *delivered* him from the *Hand* of *Saul*, *Psal. xviii. 46. The LORD liveth, and blessed be our Rock; and let the God of our Salvation be exalted. He has deliver'd us from our Enemies; he has lifted us up above those that rose up against us; he has deliver'd us from the VIOLENT MAN: Therefore, will we give thanks unto thee O LORD among the Heathen, and sing Praise unto thy Name:*

Salvation and Glory, and Honour, and Praise, and Thanksgiving; be unto the **LORD** our God, for ever and ever, *Amen*.

A Pra-



A

Practical Discourse

CONCERNING

SWEARING:

Especially in the two great Points of

Perjury and Common-Swearing.

Being the Substance of some *Sermons*
preached upon those *Subjects.*



Practical Diagnostics

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Prison and Common Law

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T H E
P R E F A C E.



HO' the prevalence of those Vices, which the following Treatise is design'd to correct, might be more than enough to justify the Publication of it; and the seasonableness of the Attempt, be a sufficient Apology for the meanness of the Performance: Yet having been induced to write upon this Subject by such a consideration, as, I think, cannot justly be excepted against; it may not amiss, before I proceed to what I chiefly aim at in this Preface, to give some short Account, how I came to be engaged in it.

It has been the great, and almost singular, care of our English Government, to provide, by its Municipal Laws, not only against False-Swearing; (a Vice in which the Interests of publick Society are so apparently concern'd, that scarce any State has suffered it to go unpunished;) but against common and vain Swearing too: And which, because it does not so immediately affect Mens civil Interests, I cannot tell whether any Laws, besides our own, have thought it their business to meddle with it.

How prudent such a Provision, as this, is, with respect to the publick Welfare, can be doubted by none, who either believe it to be the concern of States and Kingdoms to maintain a general Sense of Religion in the Minds of Men; or have considered what a mighty influence an Oath, in particular, has upon the Affairs of Government; and of what Importance it must therefore be to it, that Men should be kept under a very serious and reverend Esteem of it. There being nothing more certain, than that if once Men be allow'd to profane an Oath by common and vain Swearing; they will from thence be apt to go on, in a little while, to a farther contempt of it: And so, by degrees, arrive to an unconcernedness even for Perjury its self; as often as it shall be for their Interest to forswear themselves; and they may hope to do it without the danger of a present Punishment for their Impiety.

It must therefore be acknowledged to have been not only a pious, but politick Design too, of those great Men, whosoever they were, who by putting a restraint upon common Swearing, first endeavour'd to raise an Oath to a just Respect amongst us: And concluded, with our Saviour, that the best way to cut off the very ground of False-Swearing, would be to make it Penal for Men to Swear at all; unless it were upon some great occasion, when it was either absolutely necessary, or (at least) very fitting for them so to do.

And

And as I think it is for the Honour, as well as Benefit of our Country, that our Civil-Laws have taken such care in a Matter which has been generally neglected by most others: So I cannot but observe it to the Praise both of our Religion, and of the present Government; that of the two Attempts that have been made, of this kind, among our selves; the ^a first was since the time of the Reformation, as we know the latter, and more perfect, is owing to the Wisdom and Piety of the present Establishment.

But because the best Laws signify very little, unless they be, withal both generally made known, and duly observed: It has, therefore, been the Care of our Law-givers to shew their Prudence no less in their Provision for the publishing of this Law, than in the substance of the Law its self. And as in the Case of Perjury, (in which the civil Courts are principally concern'd;) it has been order'd that the ^b Statutes, relating to that Sin, should be solemnly declared at every Assize: So for this, (which seems to be more properly Religious) they have appointed the Publication of it to be made in the ^c House of God, and at the Time that Men are assembled for Divine Service in it.

I shall need say very little to shew either how

^a Viz. in 21 Jac. I.

^b See 5 Eliz. c. 9.

^c 21 Jac. I. c. 20. And so in this last Act of King William to the same purpose.

^d ancient

^dancient a Custom this has been in all Christian Countries; or with what good Reason our own Law-givers have herein follow'd the Examples of their Fore-Fathers, upon the like occasions. For sure if ever Men will be disposed seriously to consider their Duty, we may justly hope they will then, especially, be so, when they come together for Divine-Worship. And when it shall there be shewn them, that both their present, and their future, Welfare are concern'd in this observance; That what the Law enjoyns under a civil Penalty, is no more than what the Gospel had before required upon pain of Eternal Damnation: Either Men must be utterly lost to all Rational Conviction, or they will be prevail'd with, by these Motives, to forsake a Vice; in which there is so great a Danger, so little Pleasure, and no Advantage.

^d In the Theodosian Code we find an Ecclesiastical Law of Valentinian, directed to Pope Damasus, and read in the Churches of Rome, Anno 370. Cod. Th. Lib. xvi. leg. 20. But Sulpicius Severus carries us yet higher; and mentions the reading of the Emperour's Letter there, Anno 355. And Gothofred, in his Comments upon that Law, adds several other Instances of the like Nature. Such were the Laws of Theodosius the younger against Nestorius; and especially, the Letter of Constantine the Great, in favour of Athanasius; which he order'd to be publish'd in the Churches of Alexandria. And that this Custom held still on, the other Instances of that learned Man plainly shew. To which add the Tome of Union set forth by Constantinus Porphyrogenitus; and publish'd every Year in the Churches, in the Month of July: Vid. Matth. Blaſter, Lit. F. cap. 14. And it appears from the Novels, that the Imperial Laws were not only publish'd in the Churches, but were laid up in their Archives; and fix'd upon Tables in the Porches and Avenues of them; and directed to the Bishops for that end. Novell. viii. c. 14.

It

It was upon the first solemn Publication, at which I was present, of this Law in that Church, in which it has pleased God to call me to minister, that I composed the following Discourses; and embraced that advantage, which the publick Authority had so happily put into my hands, to lay open the Heinousness of a Vice, which, had not some such care been taken to correct it, would, I fear, have been very difficult for us, by all our other Endeavours ever to have put a stop to it.

But tho' the Occasion which I took to write upon this Subject led me no farther than to treat of common and vain Swearing; yet having resolved to write upon it, I was willing to make a farther progress in it: And to pursue it in all the several Parts of it, that our ^cSaviour's Method, (the Ground I chose to go upon) should direct to me to do.

And, first; As he laid the Foundation of his Discourse, upon the state of this Matter under the Law; so have I here^c, (but in short,) endeavour'd to shew, how the Case of Swearing stood under that Dispensation. And if in my account thereof I have adventured to give a more general Interpretation of the THIRD COMMANDMENT, than some others, of much greater knowledge in these Particulars, have done: I shall only say, That, I think, I have done it for such Reasons, as will abundantly suffice to justify

^c Mat. v. 37, &c.

[†] Chap. I.

me in it; and that in forsaking them, I do but close in with many more, neither less learned, nor less approved of, than they.

Having thus laid the Foundation for a right Understanding of our Saviour's Discourse upon this Subject; I go on, with him^s, to the Consideration of that which is, on all hands, allow'd to have been expressly forbidden to the Jews under the Law, viz. the Sin of Perjury: And have endeavour'd to furnish my Reader with such Principles, as may serve to direct him both how to avoid it; and how to discover whether he has at any time, or upon any occasion, unhappily fallen under the guilt of it? And having thus laid open the Nature of this Sin; I proceed, in the next place, to shew the Malignity of it: And how desperate an offence is thereby committed, both against God; and against the common Peace and Welfare of Mankind.

The truth is, Perjury, as it is a Sin of the most heinous Nature, whether we consider the Honour of God, or the Interests of Men: So has it always been pursued not only with the severest Denunciations of Vengeance in the other World; but for the most part, with very shameful and bitter Punishments in this.

Indeed, among the^h ancient Romans, tho' the Censors enquired very scrupulously into it; yet, for a long time, the Penalty of it, was only a

^s Chap. II.

^h Cicer. de Offic. Lib. iii.

ⁱ publick

ⁱ publick. Infamy. And so happy were tho Times, that that alone was thought to have been Punishment enough for it. But as the Manners of Men grew worse, so both they were forced to ^k encrease the rigour of their Laws as to this Matter: And most^l other Nations proceeded against it with the utmost severity; and thought the Guilt of it could be expiated with nothing less than the Life of him who fell under it. And tho' contrary to what I have now observed of the Roman Law; our own^m Statutes have, of latter Times, been more favourable to such Offenders: Yet by ourⁿ Old-Common-Law they were treated with such a Rigour, as tho' it did not ex-

ⁱ Vid. Commentarium Gothofredi, in Lib. ii. Cod. Theodos. Tit. ix. Leg. 8.

^k Vid. Leg. Citat. Arcad. & Honor. contra Perjuros. Tho' Perjury in Judicatory Causes, was before punish'd with a civil Penalty. Vid. Gothofred, ibid.

^l Diodor. Sicul. Lib. 1. pag. 69.

^m See 11 H. 7. 24 & 25. 23 H. 8. 3. 13 Eliz. 25.

ⁿ See 6 Affiz. 7. 30 Aff. 24. 40 Aff. 20. 41 Aff. 18. Glanvil, lib. ii. cap. 19. Bracton, lib. iv. tract. 5. cap. 5. Fortescue, cap. 26. The Summ of all is this; That he who violated his Oath in a Judicial Process, should lose the benefit of the Law; his Wife and Children should be turn'd out of Doors; his Fields should be ploughed up; his Gardens and Orchards spoil'd; his Goods and Chattels should be forfeited to the King; and himself be condemn'd to perpetual Imprisonment. This was the Law in case of a Petty Jury, attainted for a false Verdict: See Coke 1 Instit. lib. iii. cap. 8. §. 514. And it seems to have been taken from the Laws of King Alfred, upon the like occasion: Vid. leg. Alfred, §. 1. But for other Perjury it has been question'd whether there was any provision made by the Common Law before the 3d of Hen. 7. See Dyer 7 & 8 Eliz. fol. 242. b. And 1 Crook, p. 520, 521. Tho' yet the Mirror seems to speak in general of Perjury, and the punishment of it: Ch. iv. §. 19. And the Law of King Alfred, before mentioned, extends even to Promissory Oaths. Vid. l. c. cap. de Jure jurando.

tend to Death; yet seems to have been more bitter, than even Death it self would have been.

From this Sin of Perjury, by all confess'd to have been no less forbidden under the Law, than under the Gospel; ° I go on, to that in which some have thought the Perfection of the Gospel above the Law to have consisted, as to this Matter; namely, to enquire, whether it be lawful for us Christians to swear at all?

That it were very much to be wish'd, that Men would live so well, and deal so faithfully with one another, as not to need ever to make use of an Oath for the confirmation of what they say, is not to be questioned. Nor do I doubt but that they might live so, as to avoid it in many Cases, in which they too easily indulge themselves in the use of it. But yet still, the present State of the World consider'd, I do not see how it is possible, for the best Christian, altogether to decline it: Nor is there any reason why any one should make it a Matter of Conscience wholly to avoid it.

We are told, indeed, of P Gregory Nazianzen, that upon his conversion to the Christian Faith, he resolv'd, once for all, never to Swear while he lived; and that he did manage himself in such wise as to keep to his Resolution; and did not Swear to the Day of his Death. And several of

° Chap. III.

P Vid. Greg. Presb in Vit. Greg. Naz. Et Greg. Naz. carm. de Vit. sua. To. ii. p. 18. A.

the^a ancient Fathers there are, who have spoken, in such Terms, of this Matter; as if such a Resolution had not been so much the particular Praise of that Great Man, as the common Duty of all Christians. But yet, when all is done, either the Methods of Government must be wholly changed, and some new Models be set up, that were never yet practised in the World: Or were those Fathers now living, they must set some Bounds to their Expressions; and plainly restrain them to that, which I do indeed look upon to have been their true Meaning, viz. Not to forbid all Swearing whatsoever, but only^c all voluntary and vain Swearing; and in which they were most certainly in the right.

It was a remarkable Deference that was paid to the Honesty of one heretofore among the Athenians, ^bThat being call'd, upon a certain Occasion, to Swear to the Truth of what he said; and being come to the Altar (as the Manner there was) in order thereunto; the Judges would

^a Basil, in Psal. xiv. Chrys. Hom. xvii. in Matth. Theodoret, Epit. Div. Decret. cxvi. Epiphan. Hær. lix. Athanas. Serm. De Passion. & Crucif. Dom. Tom. i. p. 995.

^b That this was the sense of Greg. Naz. (one of the most eminent opposers of Swearing in those days) is evident from that excellent Discourse of his, which still remains to us, against those who swear much. Where first he advises, if it may be, as most safe, not to swear at all: But if that cannot be obtain'd; then in the next place to swear only in such Cases as deserve to be confirm'd by an Oath; as to free a Man's self from danger; to vindicate his Reputation, and the like. See this Subject at large pursued by him, To. ii. Iambic. xx. Περὶ Πολυόρκου, p. 224.

^c Vid. Ciceron. Orat. pro l. Corn. Balb. init.

by no means allow of it, but thought it a shame that a Person, of such known Integrity, should not be credited without an Oath. And in some of the ancient Canons, confirmed (as to this Matter) by the Civil Laws; there was that respect paid to the Priestly Function, that he who was admitted into holy Orders, was from thenceforth free from all obligation to Swear, even in those Cases, in which all others were expressly required to do it. Only, if need were, they might be obliged to give some other Caution of their Fidelity, that did not seem so much to reflect upon the sacredness of their Character.

But still, to Swear upon a just Occasion, was in the general allow'd to be not only lawful, but necessary: And those very Exemptions that freed some certain Persons from it, did but the more confirm the Churches Approbation of it in Others.

To enter upon a particular Examination of the several Passages of the Primitive Fathers

Ἐκαὶ οἱ Νόμοι, καὶ οἱ κανόνες, καλύπτει κληρικὸν Ὁμῶς says Photius, Nomoc. Tit. ix. c. 1. p 953. See also Cod. Theodos. Lib. 1. Tit. iii. Const. 25. And the same is affirmed by Matt. Blastares; viz. That the Civil-laws themselves excused Clergy-men from Swearing. Syn- tagm. Alphab. Lit. E. cap. 22. And Theodorus Balsamon is of the same Opinion; at least from the time that the Basilicon was composed; In Phot. Nomocan, Tit. ix. cap. 27. In the Laws of Lombardy, and in the Capitulars of Louis the Emperor, the same Exemption was continued. Vid. Not. Fabrotii ad Balsam: Collect. 2. Lib. 1. Cod. Tit. iii. c. 25. And even in our own Country, the Council of Berghamstead, Can. 17. confirm'd this to the Bishops: And in the Excerpta of Egbert Archbishop of York, not long after, we find the same privilege extended to all Priests: Vid. in Concil. Spelman. Tom. i.

which

which seem to speak against all Swearing whatsoever; is an Undertaking neither proper for this Place, nor otherwise necessary for the Vindication of what I have asserted in the following Discourses. But that the most severe among them did allow of Swearing, when duly required, and reverently perform'd, is evident from hence; that we find the most religious Emperors, and over whom those Fathers, which seem to speak with the greatest warmth against it, had a very powerful Influence; nevertheless both to have solemnly ^v sworn themselves, and to have continued the ^w necessity of others doing likewise. And yet, it does not appear, that ever they were censured by any of those Fathers upon this account.

But this is not all: They did not only consent to the necessity of Mens Swearing, as imposed by the Imperial Laws, but they themselves pursued the same Method; and by their own Constitutions required it likewise.

It was a very solemn, and (which ought yet more to be remark'd) a voluntary Oath too, that ^x Athanasius made in his Apology to Constantius, to free himself from a certain suspicion which that Emperor had, it seems, (without any

^v See an instance of this in *Constantine the Great: Cod. Theodos. Lib. ix. Tit. i. leg. 4. Add. Comment. Gothofred. ib. p. 8. b.*

^w *Cod. l. ii. Tit. 59. Novell. viii. c. 7, 14. & ib. xlviii. c. 1. Add. Phot. Nomocan. Tit. xiii. c. 18.*

^x *Apol. ad Const. Tom. i. p. 674. D. Who yet elsewhere speaks as if all Swearing were unlawful. Loc. supr. Citat.*

just Grounds) taken up against him. St.^y Austin freely tells us what his own practice, in this particular was: That he neither chose to swear, when he could avoid it; nor refused to swear, when he was lawfully required so to do. Even^z St. Basil himself, than whom none has written more expressly against all Swearing; yet, in his canonical Epistles imposes no punishment on those who swore as they ought to do; but by assigning a suitable^a Penance to those who swore amiss, did, in effect, acknowledge the lawfulness of Swearing, when piously and carefully perform'd. And a more ancient Father than he, St. Cyprian, complaining of the decay of Discipline in the Church; and that so far as to ascribe the Decian Persecution to the declension of it; inveighs indeed bitterly against the iniquity of those Times^b for Swearing falsely, and without a due regard to what they swore; but says not a word against the thing its self: Which yet, had he thought all Swearing whatsoever to have been unlawful, he would hardly have let pass, without declaring, upon that occasion, his resentments against it.

^y De verb. Apostol. Serm. xxviii. cap. 9.

^z See Balsam. Comment. in Can. xxix. S. Basilii: Nay he took those into Orders who had rashly sworn not to accept of them; *ib.* Can. x. And continued others in their Ministry, *ib.* Et apud Jo. Antioch. Collect. Can. Tit. 45.

^a See Can. S. Basil, *ib.* lxiv, lxxxii. Add. Can. Apost. 25, &c.

^b Non jurare tantum Temerè, sed adhuc etiam pejerare: De laps. p. 123. Edit. Oxon.

It was much about the same time, that we find^c another of those holy Men reflecting, with some warmth, upon Novatian, for obliging those, to whom he gave the Communion, to swear to him that they would never fall off from his Party. This he represents to us as a most wicked Attempt; but without the least reflection upon the Act of Swearing, as if there would have been any thing blame-worthy in that, had the substance of their Oath been lawful, and the Nature of it allowable. Nor can it, indeed, be thought that Novatian himself, who set up for a more exact observance of the discipline of the Church than any other of his time; and pretended, for that very reason, to separate from the Communion of the Catholick Bishops, that they did not keep so strictly, as they ought, to it; would both have obliged others to swear to him, and have^d solemnly sworn himself; (and that whilst he was yet in the height of his Reputation) had there been any thing in the Act of Swearing contrary to the Opinion of the most precise Men in those Days. And if we look yet lower, we shall meet with whole Councils which

^c Vid. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. Lib. vi. cap. 43. p. 199. D. Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, at the same time, both allow'd of and practised Swearing. Ib. cap. 40. p. 191. C. And if we would go yet higher; St. Basil will furnish us with the Example of St. Clement, the Companion of St. Paul: Lib. de Sp. S. cap. 29. To say nothing of that Representation which Lucian makes of the common practice of the Christians, as to this matter, in his Philopat. pag. 1121.

^d Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. vi. cap. 43. pag. 198. B.

have consented to the same Practice, and even forced Men to submit to it; as the ^c Council of Ephesus, in the Case of Nestorius, is particularly observed to have done. From all which it plainly follows, that the ancient Fathers were not against all Swearing whatsoever: Nor intended any more by their Expressions to this purpose, than what several of the Heathen ^f Moralists themselves did, when they advised their Disciples to abstain, in like manner, from Swearing altogether; but yet expounded themselves so, as to shew, that by Swearing, they meant voluntary Swearing; and that they should forbear even that too, only where there was no need of it, nor any sufficient Engagement laid upon them to oblige them to it.

I shall conclude these Remarks with that notable Account which Josephus has given us of the Essenes; one of the strictest Sects among the Jews, and so conformable in their Manners to the Rules of the Gospel, that some have mistaken them for Christians. Now one of the Maxims by which, (if we may credit that Historian) they govern'd themselves, was this of our Saviour, ^g not to swear at all. And yet to this very Rule (among others) they bound themselves with

^c Vid. Ger. Vossii. Hist. Pelag. lib. v. p. 2. pag. 524.

^f Vid. Grot. Annot. in Mat. v. 34. Where there are several Instances of each of these.

^g De Bello Judaico: lib. ii. c. 12. Καὶ πᾶν μὲν τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ Ἀυτῶν ἰχυρότερον ἔρεκεν· τὸ δὲ ὁμιλεῖν Ἀυτοῖς ἀδείσασθαι χεῖρον τὸ τ' ἐπιτοκίας καταλαμβάνειν.

an^h Oath; the better to secure their observance of it. And the only Account that we can give of this seeming Contradiction, between their Principle and Practice, is; That in Matters of this Nature, tho' the Expressions be general, yet they must still be moderated with such Limitations as both the Nature of the Thing its self requires, and the general consent of Mankind agrees, ought to be put upon them. But especially, when, by so doing, there is nothing allow'd of, but what is both innocent and reasonable: And the denial whereof would unavoidably run Mankind into endless Mischiefs and Inconveniences.

And now, having said thus much in Answer to the two great Prejudices which seemed to lie against the Account which I have given of our Saviour's Prohibition, swear not at all: The one taken from the universality of the Words themselves; the other from the Opinion, which the most primitive Fathers have been thought to have entertain'd of this Matter; and shewn that some Temperament must be allow'd of in the Exposition of it: I shall say no more in behalf of that Interpretation which I have given of it, than this; That if the Principles which I build upon be allow'd, (as, I think, I haveⁱ shewn they cannot reasonably be denied) then must my Explication be confess'd to be both very natural in its

^h Ib. p. 786. Edit. Gl. Περὶ δὲ τῆς κοινῆς ἁψαλῆς τερφῆς, ὁρῶντες ἅλως ὁμῶς φερεσθῆναι.

ⁱ Chap. III. §. 25, &c.

self, and very agreeable to that which was evidently our Saviour's Design in that place; viz. To rescue the Authority of the third Commandment, from those Abuses which the Jews had made of it. And tho' by this means it will follow, against the Error of some, that all Swearing is not forbidden; yet will it also follow, against the Licentiousness of others, that all vain and needless Swearing, but especially that of Men's common Discourse, is utterly wicked and unjustifiable.

But our Saviour was not content to restrain Men from the Practice of Customary-Swearing only; but, if I am not very much mistaken, did also farther aim at another Corruption, very frequent among the Jews; and improved by them to very bad purposes; and that was, of Swearing after some other manner, than by the Name of God only.

This was indeed a very prevailing Practice both among the Jews, and among most other ^k Nations, in those days. And that which render'd it the more dangerous, was, that they accounted it a Matter of Piety, to swear after this Manner: ^l And thought that they hereby shew'd a great respect to their Gods, in that they did not make use of their Names, upon every ordinary Occasi-

^k Homer *Il. A.* v. 234. Conf. Virg. *Æn.* xii. v. 206. Aristoph. *Neph. Aët.* I. Scen. 3. & Scholiast. *ib.* Virg. *Æn.* vi. v. 351, 458. *Æn.* vii. 234. Ammian. *Marcel. Lib.* xxiv. cap. 5. Procop. *de Bell. Persic. Lib.* i. c. 4.

^l Vid. *Suid.* in *Socrat.* p. 780. Servius in *Virg. Æn. Lib.* ix. v. 300.
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on. *And the Consequence of it was with them, as we are told it was with the Jews; that they fell, by this means, into a customary Practice of vain Swearing; and often times accounted it no great Crime, even to forswear themselves.*

It is I know very confidently affirm'd by some, That it was no part of our Saviour's design to abolish such Swearing; which they are still willing to favour as innocent and allowable. But if this Swearing were not only justly to be ^m reprov'd in the Jews, but was made use of by them to very ill Purposes; and if the ^m Design of our Saviour was to correct those Abuses which that People had introduced into their Practice, and to prevent our falling into the like hereafter: Then, since this could no ways so effectually be done, as by forbidding this kind of Swearing altogether, and that his Words do naturally invite us to such a Construction; I cannot imagine why we should not rather extend them to such a Sense, than put some kind of violence upon them for the sake of a Practice, if not plainly ⁿ Evil, yet to be sure not Good; nor that can naturally lead to

^m See below, Chap. III. §. 30.

ⁿ That to swear after the manner of the Gentiles is Evil, cannot be doubted. Hence it was that the ancient Canons of the Church expressly forbade it: See Concil. Trull. can. 94. Conf. Can. Basil. 81. And the Civil Law made such Oaths void. Basil. lib. xxii. Tit. 5. But the Canon Law is more general: and forbids Swearing by any Creature: 22. Q. I. c. 7, 8, 9, 10. Yet still they allow'd to swear otherwise than by God only. v. g. *Per Salutem Imp.* Basil. ib. By the Eucharist. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vi. cap. 43. Not to mention any more Particulars. Vid. August. Serm. de Verb. Apost. xxviii. Greg. Naz. Carm. Jamb. xx. Tom ii. pag. 226.

any wise or good End. But I shall insist no longer upon a Point, which however it be determined, will, either way, meet with a sufficient Resolution, as to what concerns our Practice; and then 'tis no great matter what becomes of our Speculations concerning it. And it is time for me to go on from the consideration of what our Saviour has forbidden us; to inquire, How ^ohe has directed us to behave our selves, in our Communication with one another.

In the Prosecution of which Enquiry, I must here once for all freely confess, that I have not kept so closely to the Words of our Saviour, as in the other Particulars I took care to do. The reason of which was, that I was willing upon this Occasion to consider all the several Sorts of Confirmation that are commonly made use of in Mens Conversation with one another, under the degree of an Oath: Which being the only Thing our Saviour was here concern'd to forbid, I thought that whatsoever was short of that, might, at least, be fairly reduced to the design of this Place.

I have, indeed, endeavour'd in my Reflections upon this Occasion, to shew, that not only the design of our Saviour did extend to all these; but that his very Expressions themselves might be so interpreted as to comprehend the most of them. And some very learned Men there are, who have accordingly given us such an Account

of them. But as I will not make my self a Party in this Debate; so having fairly represented the Grounds upon which they go, and given them all the strength that, I conceive, they are capable of; I shall leave it to every one to judge as he sees cause to do. Only as to the Rules of Practice which I have drawn from my Remarks upon this Point; those, I think, are plain and Secure: And may, as such be follow'd without any danger, or scruple, by us.

From the direction of our Saviour, how we ought to behave our selves in our Conversation with one another; I pass on to the Reason given by him, why we ought not to proceed any farther? Namely, That whatsoever is more than these, cometh of Evil. And of this I offer two Interpretations, both good, and both indifferently agreeing with his Words, as they stand in the Original. And I thought it better for me to take both, than to prefer that which our own Interpreters seem rather to have approved of: That so I might the more clearly shew upon what just Grounds this assertion of our Saviour is founded; and what good Reason he had to require us to manage our Conversation according to those Measures he had before prescribed to us.

Having thus gone thro' the Discourse of our blessed Lord upon this Subject, I conclude all with two farther Considerations, the better to improve what I had before offer'd, and to reduce

the whole to practice. In the former of which, I enquire into the Causes of that great encrease which has, in these latter times, been made of both the Sins forbidden by our Saviour on this Occasion; viz. both of false, and of vain Swearing: And having done this, I, in the next place, take occasion from thence to lay down such general Directions, as seem to be the most proper, under our present Circumstances, to draw Men off from the Practice of them both. And tho' here, (as indeed throughout this whole Treatise) I have endeavour'd to bring my Reflections into as narrow a compass as it was possible, without either falling into obscurity on the one hand; or omitting what was fit to be taken notice of on the other: Yet, I hope, I have laid down such general Rules, as being carefully applied, may suffice to serve the Necessities of the most of those who shall need either direction, or satisfaction, as to these Matters.

As for the compofure of the following Discourses, it is as plain as I was able to make it; and as the first Design I had in composing of them, required it to be. But because it may now be expected that I should answer for the Grounds of my Assertions; and give some account upon what Reasons I built them; I have therefore taken care for the satisfaction of those who are more Learned, to add all along such Observations, as shall, I trust, be sufficient to vindicate me from having, either in my Interpretation of Holy Scripture, or in my Deductions
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from it, advanced any thing without some tolerable Reason; and seldom without some good Authority, for my doing of it.

If, after all, it shall be ask'd how I came to publish my Reflections upon this Subject, I shall only add thus much to what I have already said; that as I first compos'd these Discourses out of a just respect to publick Authority, and for the benefit of those whom God has committed to my charge; so being persuaded that what was, I hope, not un-usefully heard once, may be more profitably read, and consider'd again; and reach many from the Press, whom it is not possible for me to instruct from the Pulpit: And having never met with any original Treatise in our own Language, that had so particularly handled this whole Argument; I was willing to contribute my part, towards the reforming of a Vice, which our Laws had taken so worthy a care to suppress.

This was the Motive that first led me to the publishing of these plain Discourses; and I hope, through God's blessing, they may not be altogether unprofitable to this End. Thus much I dare say, in behalf of them; that to the pious and unprejudiced, they will offer Reasons enough to convince them of their Duty as to these Matters: And for those who are not so; it is in vain to hope by any Arguments whatsoever to reclaim them.

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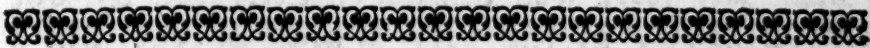
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Practical Discourse

CONCERNING

SWEARING.



CHAP. I.

In which it is briefly shewn, how the Case of Swearing stood with the Jews, under the Law.



Whatsoever be the meaning of that Expression so often repeated in this *Chapter*, and made use of by our Saviour as an Introduction to the Duty he was here about to propose to us; *Ye have heard, that it hath been said BY, or rather TO, them them of old Times: Whether in*

[*Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old Times.*]

^r So the Syriac Version renders it, and St. Chryst. heretofore understood it: *Hom. xvi. in Mat. compare Theophyl. on the place.* And so indeed the opposition between *this* and the following Verse, requires us to expound it: Ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀρχαίοις—Ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν.

those words he designed to refer to the *Law*, as delivered by *Moses* to the *Jews*; or as expounded, and corrupted, by the *Glosses* of those who follow'd after; this I take to be without all doubt; that in the *Command*, or rather *Prohibition*, before us, there is nothing proposed to us but what may, if not in *express Terms* be found in the *Law of Moses*, yet by *plain* and *undoubted Consequence* be drawn from the Words of it.

2. It has been thought by ^ssome, that what the Evangelist here renders, *Thou shalt not forswear thy self*, was originally delivered by our blessed Lord, in the very Words of the Third Commandment; *Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain*: ^cAnd that what follows in the latter part of this Verse, *But shalt perform unto the Lord thine Oaths*, was added by him from *Numb. xxx. 2.* as an *exegetical Explication* of that Precept; and to shew, that what he was about to deliver concerning it, was principally to be understood of *Promissory Oaths*; to which they suppose that *Commandment* was intended more especially, to refer.

3. Whether this Conjecture be good or no, yet this, at least, we may be confident of; that we cannot take a better Method to understand what our Saviour meant to prescribe to us *Christians*, as to this point of *Swearing*; than to consider how the Case of an *Oath* stood heretofore under the *Law*,

^s So *Grotius* in his Annotations on this place; and in his explanation of the Decalogue, Command. 3^d.

^c *Grot. ib. in Mat. v. 33.*

and what God proposed to the *Jews* concerning it.

4. And here, (1st.) It is certain, that it was, in the general, permitted to them to *swear*; provided that they did it *with that due Care*, and *after such a Manner*, as I shall presently shew God required them to do it.

5. This, in many Cases, the ^v *Law of Moses* expressly *obliged* them to^w: And their most *holy Men* not only did it upon *other Occasions*; ^z but when they did it, look'd upon it as an *Honour* paid to *God*, and as a *Service* which should not fail to be both *accepted*, and *rewarded*, by him. And to take away all scruple, as to this particular; GOD himself, upon several Occasions, *both sware* to them; and declared by his holy *Prophets*, That ^v *every Tongue should swear by him*; ^z And that *they who did so should be commended*.

6. It is certain, therefore, that it was allow'd to the *Jews* to *swear*, whenever a just Occasion required their doing of it. But then (2^{dly}.) They were to *swear ONLY* by *God's Name*, and not by the *Name* of *any other*.

7. This was implied in the *Third Commandment*; but was expressly declared to them in several other parts of their *Law*. So in the vth of *Deut.* *ſ. 13.* *Thou shalt fear the LORD thy*

^v *Exod.* *xxli.* 11. *Deut.* *vi.* 13. *x.* 20. *Numb.* *v.* 19, 21.

^w *Josh.* *ii.* 12, 17, &c. *ix.* 19, 20. *1 Sam.* *xx.* 17. *1 Kings* *i.* 13. *Ezra* *x.* 5.

^z *Nehem.* *v.* 12, 19. *x.* 29.

^y *Isai.* *xlv.* 23.

^z *Pfal.* *lxiii.* 11.

God, and serve him, and swear by his Name. And again, Chap. x. 20. *Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve; and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his Name.* And in the fiftieth of *Isaiah*, God again repeats this *Command*, and that with a more than ordinary Vehemence, *ŷ. 23. I have sworn by my self, the word is gone out of my Mouth in Righteousness, and shall not return; that unto me every Knee shall bow, every Tongue shall swear.* From all which it is evident, that God reserved *this* to himself as his own peculiar *Prerogative*; and, withal, for what reason he did so; namely, because *this* is a *Part* of that *Religious Service* which is *due* to him only; and cannot, without *Impiety*, be applied to *any other*.

8. Hence we find, that when *Joshua*, in his last exhortation to that People, thought it necessary, above all things, to warn them against apostatizing from the worship of their *own God*, to the *Gods* of the *Canaanites*, among whom they dwelt; he thought himself particularly concern'd to mention *This* to them, among the other Instances of that *Service* which they were to pay to *God only*: *Josh. xxiii. 7. Come not, says he, among these Nations that remain among you, neither make mention of the Name of their Gods; nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them.*

— *But cleave unto the LORD your God.*

9. And when in process of time they began to break in upon this caution, and to swear by some other Names; we may observe how grievously
God

God resented *this*, almost beyond any other of their *Sins*; * *Amos* viii. 14. *They that swear by the Sin of Samaria, and say, thy God, O Dan! liveth; and the Manner of Beer-shebah liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again.*

10. But this was not yet all: God required the *Jews* not only, when they did swear, to swear by his Name; but moreover, (3^{dly}.) To take care not to swear by his Name upon every ordinary Occasion; nor without a due regard to what they did swear by it. So the express letter of the Commandment assures us; *Exod.* xx. 7. *Thou shalt not take the Name of the LORD thy God in vain*: In which tho' the original Word be dubious; and may indifferently signify either what is *vain*, or what is *false*: Yet, I think, we ought not so to set up one of its Senses, as to exclude the other; but should rather suppose, that God therefore pitch'd upon a Term which comprehended both, that so we might, from the ambiguity of it, infer, that both those kinds of Swearing were unlawful.

11. Now in this Opinion I am the rather confirm'd in that I find the ^b *Chaldee Paraphrast*,
(the

* Compare *Zeph.* i. 5. *Jer.* v. 7.

^b The words of the *Chaldee Paraphrast* both in *Exodus* and *Deuteronomy*, are מלמא and שקר the former of which, not only in the *Chaldee*, but *Syriac* and *Arabic*, denotes what is to no purpose, for no gain, or advantage: The latter sometimes in vain, but more properly falsely. Nor can it be supposed, that the *Paraphrast* design'd by his latter expression to explain his former (for if so, what need had he to make use of it?) but being willing to

(the most *authentick*, as well as most *ancient Interpreter* of the *Old Testament*) to have been of the same mind: And for that reason to have rendered it in *one part* of the *Command* by a *Word* which properly signifies *in vain*; in the *other part* by an *Expression*, which originally denotes *falsly*. And since it cannot be doubted but that *light* and *vain Swearing* is in its own nature *sinful*, and what must, by consequence, have always been *forbidden* by *God* as *such*: I cannot but wonder what should move those, who freely allow this, and acknowledge the words of the *third Commandment* to refer indifferently to both the significations here proposed; yet, after all, to doubt, ^c whether *God* design'd to prohibit any thing more *than Perjury* by it.

12. But (4^{thly}) and to conclude these *Reflections*: Tho' for the *Reasons* now mentioned, I am persuaded, that all *vain*, and *common Swearing*, does not only fall within the design of the *third*

reach the full meaning of the *Original*, and knowing the *Hebrew* word to be capable of *both* those *senses*, he thought good rather to mention both, than to prefer either. But others were not so cautious: The *Jerusalem Targum*, and that of *Jonathan*, both render it *in vain*: The *lxx* *ἐν μάταις*: *Aquila*, *εἰς εἰρήν*: And the *Latin Versions* are unanimous in the same sense, and that not only since *St. Hierom's* time, but from the beginning; as is plain from *St. Cyprian*, *Testimon. lib. iii. num. 12*. Compare *Psal. cxxxix. 20*. Where the same *Word* is rendered after the same manner.

^c This Opinion was very ancient: *Theodoret* mentions it, *Quest. in Exod. Qu. 41*. But opposes it, as not coming up sufficiently to the design of the *Command*, and to the proper signification of the *Words* of it. See *Grot. in Loc. Dr. Hammond, Pract. Catech. Sect. of Swearing*.

Commandment,

Commandment, as now expounded to us, but was originally forbidden in the very Letter of it: Yet as *perjury*, or *false Swearing*, is by far the greater Sin, and more dishonourable to God; so I do not at all question, but that it was more especially therein prohibited by him.

13. And so much the words of our Saviour, *Matth. v. 37.* do undoubtedly imply: Who for this reason deliver'd this: as the *known, allow'd, Interpretation* of it among the *Jews*; *Thou shalt not forswear thy self, but shalt perform unto the LORD thine Oaths.* Nor indeed could they possibly have made any doubt of this, after that express Prohibition which God had given them to the same purpose, *Lev. xix. 12. Ye shall not swear by my Name falsely; neither shalt thou profane the Name of thy God: I am the LORD.*

14. Such was the Case of *Swearing* under the Law: And I need not say, that Christ, (*Who came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it*^d, and who in the very *Instance* before us has effectually done so;) still requires at least the same Care, as to this matter, of *us now*, that God did of the *Jews* heretofore. But because this last Point is by far of the greatest moment of any in this Case, and taken for granted by our Saviour, as a thing of which no one could make any doubt: I shall therefore begin my Reflections with a particular consideration it; and shew, 1st. *What it is for a Man to forswear himself?* And

^d *Mat. v. 17.*

how many ways he may be capable of so doing? And 2^{dly}. Wherein the peculiar Malignity of this Sin does consist? And having so done, I shall need say nothing more to dissuade any serious, considering Christian from the practice of a Sin, so hainous in it self; and so ruinous, both to our future Happiness in the other World; and even to our present Peace, and Security, in this.



CHAP. II.

Wherein is consider'd, what Perjury is; and how many ways it may be committed? And some Reflections offer'd to shew the particular Hainousness, and Malignity of it.

[Thou shalt
not forswear
thy self; but
shall perform
unto the
LORD thine
Oaths.]

I. **T**O proceed the more clearly on this great Point, I must first of all observe, that to *swear* is properly nothing else but to *call God to witness*; to *appeal to God for the Truth of what we speak*; as the highest confirmation we are capable of giving to it.

2. Now the Truth which we may be required, by this means, to *confirm*; may relate either to what is *past*, or *present*; (as when we *affirm* a thing to *Be*, or *not to Be*; to *have been Done*, or
not

not Done; in such a Manner, and with such Circumstances; or otherwise :) Or it may relate to somewhat yet to come; (as when we oblige our selves to *Do such a thing*, or *Not to Do it*; and that under such certain Conditions, or without them; as the nature of our Engagement shall chance to be.) The former of these is usually called, an *Affertory*; the latter, a *Promissory Oath*. And because a Man may divers ways *forswear* himself in each of these, if he does not take a due care to prevent it; it will be necessary for me distinctly to consider, what are the general ways by which we may be most likely to contract such a guilt in either of them.

3. First then, in the case of an *Affertory Oath*; he *forswears himself*, who *swears* to the *Truth* of any *Fact*, which at the same time he either *certainly knows* to be *false*, or does not *certainly* know to be *true*. As for Example; that *such or such a Thing* was *Done*, by *such or such a Person*; which, at the same time, he either *knows* that *Person* *did not Do*, or has no sufficient evidence to move him to *believe* that he *did Do* it, For this being a down-right *Lie* in the *Affertion*, must needs become *Perjury* by the addition of an *Oath* to it.

4. And here it matters not whether a Man *certainly knows* what he *swears* to be *false*: It is enough that he *does not know* it to be *true*. Nay, or should it happen to be *true*; yet if he thought it to have been otherwise, and yet *swore* to the *Truth* of it; he *forswore himself*: Nor will his

mistake at all contribute to the excusing of his *Perjury* before God.

5. Again: A Man may *for swear* himself, not only by *Swearing* that which is *altogether untrue*; but by *prevaricating* in any the *least Circumstance* of what he delivers, and confirms with an *Oath*. As for instance; * If he *swears* to a Matter as *certain*, of which he has only a *probable Assurance*: * If he affirm that upon his *own knowledge*, which he has received only upon the credit of *some other*: * If he *adds* any thing to what he relates; or willingly *conceals* any thing that may give light, or weight to it; or, in any other Circumstance, notably affect the *Point* to which he *swears*. In all these, and the like Cases; he who *knowingly*, and *designedly*, *Prevaricates*, or otherwise *departs*, but in the least tittle, from the *Truth* of what he delivers, *for swears* himself; tho' what he says should, in the main, be never so *true*.

6. In short; he who will *swear* with a good Conscience, in any *Oath* of *this kind*, must first duly consider what he is about to say; and then must proceed according to the *strictest Measures* of *Truth*, and *Fidelity*, in it. He must neither *add* to, nor *diminish* from, what he knows to be the *Truth*. Must deliver what is *certain*, as *certain*; what is *doubtful*, as *doubtful*: What he *knows himself*, as upon his *own knowledge*; what he has *received from others*, as *received from them*: And in so doing he may be sure that he shall not *for swear* himself.

7. As

7. As for the other kind of *Oaths*, Secondly; those which relate to somewhat *yet to come*; he is to be accounted, in the *first* place, to *for swear himself*, who *promises* upon his *Oath* to *do* that, which, at the same time, he resolves not to *perform*: As for example, that he will *meet a Man* in a *certain place*; where yet he *intends* not to *meet him*; or that he will *do him* such a *kindness*, which he resolves, all the while, *not to do* for him.

8. And, because no one can be supposed *really* to *intend* to *do* that, which he *knows*, beforehand, he *cannot do*: Therefore, *Secondly*; he who *swears* to *do any thing* which is *apparently* beyond his *ability*, and which he cannot but be sensible is so, must be reckon'd to fall under the same *guilt*; and to *for swear* himself, as effectually, as if he had *directly intended* not to *perform* what he *obliged* himself to *do*.

9. Thus if a *Trader*, who is not worth a *hundred Pounds* in the *World*, nor knows which way to find credit to raise such a *Sum*; shall yet, to over-reach another, who is a stranger to his *Concerns*, and to gain some present advantage to himself by it, *swear*, upon a certain day, to pay him *five hundred Pounds*; and fail of fulfilling it: He must be look'd upon to have been *for sworn*, not only after such *failure*, but from the very *first Minute* that he *swore* to *do that*, which he *knew* it was not in his *power* to *perform*. Nay, tho' by some lucky accident, which he did not fore-see, he should be enabled to *make good* his
Y 4 *Promise*,

Promise, and accordingly *fulfil* it; yet would not this clear him of the guilt of having *sworn* *falsely*, at the *time* that he *made* his *Oath*: Because, at that *time*, he had no *prospect* that he should be *able*; nor could by consequence *really* *intend*, to be as good as his *word*.

10. And for the same reason it will follow farther, *Thirdly*; That if a Man *swear* to *do* any *thing* which he knows it is not *lawful* for him to *do*; he *forswears* himself; tho', at that time, he should *intend* to *fulfil* it. Because by so doing, he *obliges* himself to *do* that which he *knows* he *ought* not to *do*; nor, if he means to behave himself like a *good Man*, must presume to *perform*.

11. Indeed, as to these two last Instances; if the *Promise* so *sworn* to, as I have supposed, had neither any *known impossibility* in it, nor was *unlawful* to be *fulfilled*, at the *time* when the *Oath* was made; but by some *following Accident* became either *impossible*, or *unlawful*, before the *time* in which it ought to have been *accomplish'd*: In this case, the Person who *swore*, will have done nothing amiss; nor be otherwise obliged by his *Oath*, for the present, than to *perform* what he *promised*, as far as he is yet *able*, and it may be *lawful* for him to *do* it. But if, in process of time, these *Impediments* should be *removed*, and the *obligation* of his *Oath* still continue *in force*: Then he will, from thenceforth, become engaged to a *complete performance* of his *Promise*; and *forswear* himself, if he shall *neglect*, or *refuse*, the *fulfilling* of it.

12. By

12. By consequence, Fourthly ; He who *swears* to do any thing *contrary* to what he had *before sworn* to do ; (his former Oath still continuing to oblige) must *swear falsely* ; and put himself under an absolute *necessity* of being *forsworn* : Because, in this case, either he must keep his *latter Oath*, and then he will be guilty of *Perjury* by the breach of his *former Obligation* ; or he must stand to his *first Engagement*, and, by so doing, act contrary to his *second Oath*.

13. And this I say, supposing the *former Oath* still to *continue to oblige*. For, otherwise ; if the *Oath first made*, were either in it *self unlawful* ; and, as such, from the *beginning of no force* : Or if the *Obligation* of it were founded upon such *Circumstances*, as render'd it valid only for a *certain Time*, and under some *certain Conditions* ; and either that *Time* is *pass'd*, or those *Circumstances* are *altered* ; and so the *reason*, and *foundation* of the *Oath* *ceasing*, the *Obligation* of it *ceases* together with *them* : In all these Cases, the *latter Oath* will be nevertheless lawful to be taken, for its being contrary to the tenour of a *former*, which either *never did oblige at all* ; or the *Obligation* of which was evidently *expired*, before the taking of the other.

14. But, Fifthly ; Tho' a Man should *promise* nothing, but what he is both *able to perform*, and *may lawfully fulfil* ; and should truly *intend*, when he *swears* to it, to *act* according to his *Oath* : Yet, if he shall afterwards *change his Mind* ; or,
by

by any culpable neglect, omit to make good his Promise, or render himself incapable of doing it; in all these Cases, he will become *perjur'd* by such his omission: Not indeed from the time that he took the Oath; but from the time that he should, and, but for his own fault, might have performed it.

15. And this I say, supposing that the Oath was neither obtain'd by any such force, or fraud, as render'd it void from the beginning; and that the Person to whom it was made, and who was alone concern'd in the advantage of it, does expect, and insist upon, the performance of it. For otherwise, if either the Oath were void from the beginning, and did never oblige at all; or if he to whom it was made, and for whose security it was taken, shall think fit to release it: In this Case the Person who took the Oath will become clear of all Obligation by it; and not be forsworn, tho' he should neglect to fulfil what he had promised to do.

16. It will, I presume, be needless for me to add, Sixthly; That he who will keep himself from swearing falsely, must deal clearly, and openly, in all that he swears unto. * Must intend to be understood according to the common and natural import of the Words in which he swears: * Must use no equivocation, no mental reservation, whereby to impose upon those to whom he swears: But must account himself obliged to do, according as his Words, and Actions, declare:
And

And not think to escape with his ^e Pretence, who *swore with his Tongue, but kept his Mind free from being obliged by it.* Because all these are, in truth, such manifest *prevarications*, so opposite to the *fairness* and *ingenuity* of an *honest Man*; that a Man must be desperately deluded indeed, before he can think that he may escape the *guilt of Perjury*, by such means.

17. I will rather observe this one thing farther, and which indifferently respects both the *kinds* of *Oaths* I have now mentioned: That as, in all these *Cases*, he who neglects to acquit himself according to the true *meaning* of what he swears, *forswears* himself; so if he shall by any means *knowingly*, and *purposely*, *seduce*, *persuade*, *afright*, or otherwise *tamper* with any other *person*, to *forswear* himself; he will, by his so doing become *partaker* in the *Perjury*; and render himself even more *guilty* than he who, by his encouragement, or instigation, *forswears* himself.

18. Nay farther: He who *exacts* an *Oath* of another, whereby he either *certainly knows*, or may *reasonably suppose*, that the *Person* of whom he *requires* it will *forswear* himself; does by that means, if not involve himself in an *equal*

^e Apud Ciceron. de Offic. lib. iii.

^f So St. Augustine expressly determines: Serm. de Verb. Apost. 28. cap. 10. Et ipse qui exigit jurationem, multum interest, si nescit illum falsum juraturum, an scit. Si enim nescit, & ideo dicit, Jura mihi ut fides ei fiat; non audeo dicere non esse peccatum; tamen Humana tentatio est. Si autem scit eum fecisse, novit fecisse, videt fecisse, & cogit jurare, Homicida est. Ille enim suo Perjurio se perimit: sed iste Manum interficientis & expressit & pressit.

guilt,

guilt, yet render himself not much less *criminal*, than he who commits the *Perjury*: And must expect to render an account, not only for the *dishonour* which, thereby, is done to *God*; but also for his *uncharitableness* towards his *Neighbour's Soul*.

19. From what has been said, it may appear, what it is for a Man to *forswear himself*? And *how many ways* he may be liable so to do? I proceed,

2^{dly}. To offer some Reflections to shew, wherein the *peculiar Malignity* of this *Sin* does consist?

20. Now that will appear from this one plain *Observation*; which no one, who understands what an *Oath* is, can make any doubt of: Namely, That he who forswears himself, does thereby in a most desperate manner * *Affront* the *Majesty of God*, and * *Wound* his own *Soul*; and moreover, * render himself *criminal* towards his *Neighbour*; and, as much as in him lies, * declare himself a *common Enemy* to *Mankind*.

21. For 1st. As to what concerns the *Majesty of God*; what can strike more directly at that, than this *Sin of Perjury*? When a Man is not contented to *lie*, and *cheat*, and *abuse* his *Neighbour*; but, the better to accomplish all this wickedness, dares even to *appeal to God* for his *Integrity*: And, by so doing, endeavours to intitle him, who is *Truth* its self, to a part in his *Sin*;

as

as if he would approve of his villany; and become, in some measure, confederate with him in his Impiety.

22. This is the true *meaning* of every *wilful Perjury*: And then I need not say, what a complication of Guilt, and Impudence, there must needs be in it.

23. If we consider the *nature* of this *Sin*, with respect to Men, the least that can be said of it is, that it is a *wilful, deliberate, Imposition* upon the *candour* and *sincerity* of him to whom we *swear*: Which sure must be one of the *basest*, and most *dis-ingenuous, Practices* in the World.

24. And as for the *Design* of it; that is, usually not at all less sinful, than the Means that are made use of for the accomplishment of it. Whilst the Person to whom we *swear*, is not only to be *deceived*, but, by virtue of that *deceit*, is to be injured in his *Estate*; his *Reputation*; nay or, it may be, to the loss of his very *Life* it self.

25. And this, God knows, were bad enough, were the *Sin* to *end* here. But that it does not; it proceeds still farther: Whilst for the accomplishment of this vile Purpose, the *false swearer* at once both despises the *Divine Justice*; and *flies* in the very *face* of it; and *recurs* to God both for the *countenance* of his *Treachery*, and for the *confirmation* of the *Lie*, by which it is to be brought about.

26. Now he who can be so daringly wicked as to do this; must either *not believe* that there is *any God at all*; or he must disclaim his *knowledge*

ledge of, and concern for, what is done here below: Or, if he confesses both these; he must then be concluded to *defy* his *Vengeance*. For I cannot suppose any one to be capable of so far mistaking the *Divine Nature*, as to think, that a God of *Truth*, will either endure to be made a *Party* to what is *false*; or not *avenge* himself on that Man, who shall presume so to do.

27. Such therefore is the *Malignity* of this *Sin*, as it *relates* to God: Nor is it, ^{2^{dly}}, less dangerous as it *respects* our *selves*.

28. For proof whereof I must observe, that in every *Oath* God is appeal'd unto, both as a *witness* of the *Truth* of what we *say*; and also as a most just, and powerful *Judge*, to *punish* us for our *falsehood*, if it be not.

29. This is so essential to the *nature* of an *Oath*, that, without it, all the *security* of such an *Appeal* would be quite lost; and the *design* of *Swearing*, overthrown. For what reason would any one have to *believe* another upon his *Oath*, more than upon his *bare Word*; but that both he who *swears*, and he to *whom* the *Oath* is *made*, do believe, that *God* is thereby made the *Surety* of what is spoken: And will *avenge* both himself first, and then the Person whose *trust* is, by this means, *deceived*, upon that Man, who shall be so presumptuous, as by *swearing falsely*, to abuse both?

30. Now this being granted; which, without destroying all the *benefit*, and *intention* of an *Oath*, cannot be *denied*; it must follow, that there is

hardly any *Sin* by which a Man does so directly wound his own *Soul*, and cut himself off from all the *hopes* of *Salvation*, as by this. Because in this *Sin*, a Man gives up all claim to *God's Mercy*; nay more, desires *God* so to deal with him as what he says is *true*; that is, in other words, to *damn* him, if it be not. And what can he who has done this *pretend* to, or even *hope* for, at *God's* hands? Who has already given *Verdict* against himself; and with his own Mouth pronounced, or rather *chosen*, his own *Doom*?

31. And this I take to have been the ground of that terrible *clause* in the *Sanction* of the *Third Commandment*; the like whereof we do not meet with in any other, nor can we suppose that it was added to this, without some peculiar reason for the doing of it: *Thou shalt not take the Name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain. He will not hold him guiltless, that is, he will not forgive him; will not treat him with that favour he will do other sinners: But will look upon him as a guilty, condemn'd Malefactor; one whom his own Mouth hath convicted; and will punish him accordingly.*

32. Such is the *danger* to which every *Perjury* a Man commits, exposes his immortal *Soul*. And if we may estimate the *hainousness* of any *Sin*, by the *hatred* which *God* bears to it, we must then conclude this to be one of the most *grievous* of any; as we are sure it is of all others,
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in a singular manner, odious to God, and *destructive* of our *Salvation*.

33. I add, 3^{dly}: That it is, above any other *Sin*, the most *injurious* to *Mankind*; as being, in its own nature, directly opposite to the *peace*, and *security*, of the *World*.

34. I have already observed, that the general cause which moves any one to *forswear* himself, is either to *gratify* his own *Lusts*, or to *promote* his *Interest*, tho' at the cost of his *Neighbours Welfare*. And, I believe, whosoever shall consider the many Instances wherein this Sin is usually committed, will find that I was not mistaken in my Judgment of it.

35. But the evil does not stop here; but oftentimes affects the *Publick*, as well as violates mens *private Rights*. Such are all those *Perjuries* which are committed in the *publick Administration* of *Justice*; and by means of which, either *honest Men* are *condemned*; or *Evil-doers* are *acquitted*; and the *Ministers* of *Justice* are made the *Instruments* of *Unrighteousness*; and all the *Ends* of their Institution are rendered *useless*, or even *hurtful*, to the *Common-wealth*.

36. And thus far, every *single act* of *Perjury* is an *Offence* against *Man*, as well as a *Sin* against *God*. But now, if we shall consider the *nature*, and *tendency*, of such a *Practice* in the general; and reason upon the *proper*, and *natural Effects* of it; we shall find it to be a *common abuse* of *Mankind*: *Destructive* of the very *Foundation* of
of

of *humane Society*; and which being allow'd of, must tend to the overthrow of all *Peace*, and *Right*, and *Property*, in the World.

37. Now that I thus prove: The *Foundation* of all *Society*, and without which no affairs of Life can be transacted, is that *common trust*, and *confidence*, which Men naturally have in one another. Without this, no *State*, no *Community*, tho' never so small; not a *private Family* can subsist. There can be no *dealing* with, nor *dependance* upon, one another. Every Man must become afraid of his Neighbour; and not account his *Goods*, or even his *Life* its self, any longer his own, than he can guard them against the *cunning*, or *force*, of the next Man he meets; who (for ought he knows) may design to *rob* him of both.

38. Which being so, it must follow, that whatsoever does in its own nature tend to *overthrow* this *Trust* between *Man* and *Man*, must be look'd upon as a *Crime* against *humane Society*; because it naturally *leads* to the *destruction* of it.

39. Now this *Perjury*, in the most outrageous manner, does: Inasmuch as it violates the *strongest Security*, that one Man is capable of giving to another, of his *truth* and *sincerity*. And therefore the *false swearer* is so far from deserving any favour of Men, that were he dealt with, as he ought to be, he should be accounted to have *forfeited* all *right* to the *benefits* of *Society*: Should be treated as a kind of *Out-law* in the *Common-wealth*; an *Enemy* to *Truth* and *Justice*;

stice; to *Peace*, and *Property*; and no longer under the *Protection* of those *Laws* by which others are preserved in their *Rights* and *Liberties*.

40. And now, when such is the apparent *Malignity* of this *Sin*, that it renders Men not only *obnoxious* to *God's Vengeance*, but even *unable* of his *Mercy*; and, as if that were not enough, exposes them to the *Resentments* of *Mankind* too: One would think nothing more could be desired to draw them off from the practice of such a Vice, as at once bespeaks them unworthy to live upon the Earth; and, without a very extraordinary Repentance, will be sure to shut them out of the Kingdom of Heaven.

41. It is indeed a Matter of very sad consideration, to think, that under so pure and holy, so just and sincere an Institution, as that of the Gospel; there should be any need either of laying down any *Rules* for the *prevention* of such a *Sin*, or of *using* any *Arguments*, to draw Men off from the *Commission* of it. But alas! experience shews that there is, at this day, but too much need of both. And that after all which either the Commands of God, or the Laws of Men, have been able to do for the suppression of it; yet by reason of *false-swearing* both Mens *Souls* suffer, and our very *Land its self* mourneth.

42. I shall conclude these Reflections with the same exhortation that the Prophet *Zachary* heretofore made to the *Jews*; under much the same Circumstances with ours at this day, as to what concerns

concerns this great Evil: *Zech. viii. 16.* “ *These*
 “ *are the things that ye shall do: Speak ye eve-*
 “ *ry Man the Truth to his Neighbour; execute*
 “ *the Judgment of Truth and Peace in your*
 “ *Gates. And let none of you imagine Evil in*
 “ *your Hearts against his Neighbour; and love*
 “ *no False-Oath: For all these are things that*
 “ *I hate, saith the LORD.*

C H A P. III.

Wherein is shewn, That all Swearing what-
soever, is not forbidden under the Gos-
pel: And an enquiry is made, what
that Swearing is which our Saviour has
prohibited, as absolutely evil and un-
lawful.

I. **I**T has been the mistake of ^a some [But I say
 who have attended more to the unto you,
Words of our Saviour, in that Pas- swear not at
 sage of *St. Mat. ch. v. v. 34.* I say all, &c.]
unto you, swear not at all; than either to the
occasion, or design of them; to conclude, That

^a Several Passages to this purpose, we find in some of the Fa-
 thers themselves: But the *Pelagians* held it as their Opinion: See
Hilar. Epist. ad Demetriad. apud Hieron T. 2. Cœlestius, apud Eund.
T. 4. de Scientia Div. Leg. So did the *Waldenses* after them: not
 to mention those Fanatics of our own times, who do likewise.

all manner of swearing whatsoever is utterly forbidden to Christians under the Gospel. And indeed not only the Prohibition of our blessed Lord in that place; but that express Confirmation which we meet with of it, in the vth of St. James, *ſ. 12.* does ſeem, at the firſt ſight, to give but too much countenance to ſuch a concluſion.

2. To clear this difficulty, and to ſhew how far it may ſtill be *lawful* for a *Chriſtian* to take an *Oath*; but yet withal, with how great care and circumſpection he ought to do it; I ſhall now enter upon a particular enquiry into this whole Matter; and endeavour with all poſſible exactneſs to diſcover, what the deſign of our *Saviour* was in that paſſage upon which this difficulty is founded, and by which it muſt be determined.

3. In purſuance of which enquiry, I ſhall not doubt in the (1^{ſt}) place to affirm, that how much ſoever the *Words* under debate, if ſtrictly taken, may ſeem to favour ſuch an Opinion; yet it was never the *Intention* of our Lord utterly to forbid *all swearing whatsoever*, as *ſimply* and *absolutely unlawful*, under the *Gospel*. And this I affirm on theſe two Accounts:

1^{ſt}. That there was *no reaſon* why he ſhould do ſo; but rather a great deal of *reaſon* to the contrary. And,

2^{dly}. That it is *certain* he *did not* do it: And therefore that we muſt put ſome *reſtriction*, upon that ſeemingly *general Prohibition* before mentioned, *ſwear not at all*.

4. And

4. And 1st. That there was *no reason* why our Saviour should have *forbidden all Swearing* whatsoever, is evident from hence; that an *Oath* being in its own nature nothing else but an *appeal* to *God* for the *Truth* of what we say, must be acknowledged, when *duly* and *reverently* taken, to have nothing *evil*, or otherwise *irregular*, in it: but on the contrary, to be an *act* of *religious Worship*, by which the honour and authority of God, are eminently advanced. Forasmuch as by *calling* of God to *witness* in *all Places*, and upon *all* suitable *Occasions*, we confess him to be *every where present*; to *know* and *observe* *all* the *affairs* of *Men*; to be the *searcher* of the *Heart*: In a word, to be most *true* and *faithful* himself; and a most *just* and *powerful* avenger of all *Falshood* and *Treachery* in *others*. And by all this, we do evidently declare and magnify his *Divine Perfections*; and shew to all the World what a Sense we have of his *goodness* and *greatness*.

5. Hence it is that God evermore reserved this as a proper Part of that *Worship* which was *due* to *himself only*; and might not, without impiety, be given to any other. He commanded the *Jews* not more to ^b *serve him*, than to *swear by his Name*: And when, in process of time, they began to *swear* by some *other Gods*; I have shewn you both how grievously he ^c *resented* the *Af-*

^b Deut. vi. 13. x. 20. Exod. xxiii. 13. Josh. xxiii. 7, 8.

^c Jer. v. 7. Hof. iv. 15. Amos viii. 14. Zeph. i. 5. See above Chap. I.

front, and how severely he was pleased to punish them for it.

6. Now this being the case of *an Oath*, that, when duly and reverently taken, it is so far from having any thing amiss in it, that it is rather an *act of religious Worship*; and, as such, *honourable to God*, as well as *useful to Mankind*: What reason can there be given, why our *Saviour* should aim at the *utter abolishing* of it? Or what is there to be assign'd in it unworthy of that Religion, which he came to establish in the World?

7. But if there be therefore no reason to be given, why our *Saviour* should have *forbidden* all manner of *Swearing*; sure I am there are reasons enough to be offer'd, why he should not: And those such as will render the *Opinion* of those who pretend he has done it, very *improbable*; which is all I am yet concern'd to shew.

8. For, indeed, what *Practice* is there upon which the *welfare*, and *security* of *Mankind*, does more depend, than upon the *serious*, and *sacred*, *Use* of an *Oath*? It is this unites Men into Society with each other: Secures to the Magistrate the obedience and help of the People; and to the People the careful and regular Government of the Magistrate. It is by this assurance that the greatest Affairs of Life are transacted; Mens Fortunes establish'd; and Justice its self upheld and maintain'd. By this, Evil-doers are convicted; Injuries are redress'd; and Men's Rights preserved. Thro' this Men are enabled
to

to Treat with those whom they never saw before: Of whose Integrity they can have no other security; nor, having this, do they desire any better. In short; how great a confusion, how insuperable a mischief, the *utter abolishing of all Swearing*, must bring to the affairs of Mankind, this one consideration may suffice to shew; that (the treachery and distrust of humane Nature considered) it would almost utterly destroy all confidence in one another; would dissolve Society, and lay the ground of an eternal fearfulness and suspicion between every Man and his Neighbour: and so bring in, in good earnest, that *State of War*, which some have fancied Mankind was naturally born in; and from which 'tis certain, nothing but mutual Trust, and Compacts, can secure us.

9. And if this be so, can it reasonably be imagined that our *Saviour Christ*, who was so great a lover of Men, and who so well knew of what use, or rather necessity, the religious Practice of *Swearing* was to the World; would, without any just ground for his so doing, have utterly forbidden the continuance of it?

10. But especially, when it shall farther be consider'd, that *God*, under the *Law*, did not barely tolerate this Practice in the *Jews*, as a necessary condescension to their Infirmities; but upon every fitting occasion, himself ^d *sware* to

^d Above seventy Instances of this may be taken out of the Old Testament.

them; and in many Cases, ^e required them to do likewise; as has been before observed.

11. Now this, as it ^f plainly shews, that there can be nothing *sinful* in the Practice of *Swearing*, in the general; so does it render it still more improbable, that our *Saviour* should, without need, have deprived Mankind of so useful an Institution; and by so doing, should moreover have cast some sort of Reflection upon the Law of God its self, which *allow'd*, and *required*, the *using* of it: And that too with relation to that part of it, of which he tells us, nevertheless, in this very Chapter; that *He came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it*^g. And which we ought not therefore to doubt was what he intended, in the *third*; as we confess it was what he did, in the *other Commandments*.

12. I conclude, therefore, that upon all these Accounts it is, at least, *very improbable*, that our blessed *Saviour* should have designed *utterly* to *forbid* all manner of *Swearing*, as *sinful* and *unlawful*. I add 2^{dly}, That whatever that Passage, we are here enquiring into, may seem to offer to the contrary, it is *certain* he did *not* do it; as I shall now make appear.

^e Exod. xxii. 11. Numb. v. 19, 21. xxx. 10. Deut. xxix. 12. 2 Chron. vi. 12.

^f *August. de Verb. Apost. Serm. 28. Si Peccatum esset Juratio, nec in Veteri Lege diceretur, Non Perjurabis, reddes autem Domino Jus-jurandum. Non enim peccatum præciperetur nobis.*

^g Matt. v. 17.

13. That St. Paul has solemnly sworn in almost every one of his *Epistles*, is a ^h Truth so evident, that it must be impossible for any one who knows what an *Oath* is, to be able seriously to doubt of it. *God is my witness*, says he, *Rom. i. 9. I call God for a Record upon my Soul*, *2 Cor. i. 23. The God and Father of our LORD Jesus Christ, who is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not*, *2 Cor. xi. 31. Behold, before God, I lie not*, *Gal. i. 20.* And several Expressions he elsewhere has of the like nature.

14. Now in all these, either this great Apostle was guilty of *Sinning*, or he was not. That he committed any *Sin* in thus Writing; but especially a *wilful, known, and deliberate Sin*; is very hard to suppose: I am sure must never be allowed by those who believe him to have been acted by the immediate *Inspiration* of the *holy Ghost*, in what he wrote. And yet supposing our *Saviour* to have utterly forbidden the use of *Swearing*, to all Christians, and upon any occasion; how shall we ever be able to excuse him, from a gross, presumptuous, contempt of his Commandment.

^h It is true St. *Augustine* tells us, that the *Pelagians* denied these to be *Oaths*: and held nothing to be Swearing, unless it were put into that express Form; *BY GOD*. But he tells us withal, that their only reason for denying this was to avoid the Example of St. Paul, and the force of our Argument taken from it: And justly charges them thereupon with an utter Ignorance of what it was to swear. See *Tom. 2. Epist. 89. ad Hilar.* And yet St. *Basil* was once almost of the same mind: But it was the same reason which seems to have led him to it. See his *Exposit. in Psal. xiv.*

15. That

15. That *St. Paul* should have continued all his Life ignorant of such a Prohibition, is very strange: Nor has it, that I know of, been pretended by any.

16. That he had any particular *allowance* made to him, to exempt him from the *Obligation* of it, and to authorize him to *act* directly *contrary* to the *command* of *Christ*, and to the *common Duty* of all other Christians, does not appear; nor ought it without some very good grounds to be supposed by us. I conclude therefore, ⁱ that had the use of *Swearing* been *utterly taken away* under the *Gospel*; neither would *St. Paul* have laid so great a stumbling-block in our way, as he could not but think his Example might be likely to prove to the Church of *Christ*: Nor would the *Holy Ghost* have given so much countenance to a Practice, neither very commendable in its self; nor, upon any account, to be imitated by those, for whose benefit and instruction those very *Epistles* were *inspired* by him.

17. But we have not only the *Example* of *St. Paul*, tho' that were enough, to direct us in this Matter. Our blessed *Saviour* himself has done

ⁱ So *St. August.* l. de Mendacio ad Consentium, Tom. iv. Juravit ipse Apostolus in Epistolis suis, & sic ostendit, quomodo accipiendum esset quod Dictum est; Dico vobis, non jurate Omnino.— And a little after: Quia praecepti violati reum Paulum, praesertim in Epistolis conscriptis atque editis ad Spiritualem Vitam, Salutemque Populorum, nefas est dicere; Intelligendum est illud quod positum est, Omnino, ad hoc positum, ut Quantum in te est non Affectes, non Ames, non quasi pro Bono, cum aliqua Delectatione, Appetas Jus-jurandum.—

likewise; and ^k that by the confession of those, who yet will by no means allow of his *Apostles Swearing*. It has been thought by ^l some, that that *Form* of *Speech* so often used by our LORD in confirmation of what he delivered, *Verily, verily, I say unto you*; was not merely a *vehement Asseveration*, but rather was a *direct* and *formal Oath*. Tho' in this, I confess, I am not so well satisfied, as to be willing to lay any great stress upon it; yet that he did, truly ^m swear, at his Arraignment before the High-Priest, is hardly to be doubted. When being *adjured* by him, (after the Manner used among the *Jews*) to tell *him whether he were the Christ*, or no: He readily complied with the Obligation that was laid upon him; and answer'd plainly, that *he was*. And in the xth of the *Revelations*, St. *John* puts it beyond all dispute, that the *Angel* with whom he discoursed, did do likewise, and that with great solemnity too; for *he lifted up his hand, and S W A R E, by him that liveth for ever and ever: &c. 5, 6.*

18. I conclude therefore, That what God both
* *prescribed*, and * *practised* under the *Law*;
* What not only St. *Paul*, but our *Saviour Christ*

^k Vid. *Cœlest. Epist. de Scientia Divina legis*: Apud *Hieron. T. IV. p. 63.*—

^l So *Origen* in *Mat. Tract. 35. p. 114.* L. *Chryf. in Heb. Hom. ii. August. in Jo. Tract. 41. Hieron. in Ezek. c. xvi. In Vet. Testamento Dei Juramentum est, Vivo Ego, Dicit Dominus: In Novo autem, Amen, Amen, dico Vobis. Greg. Nyssen. de Scop. Christian. Tom. iii. p. 311.*

^m See Dr. *Hammond*, on *Mat. xxvi. Lett. i. Grot. in Mat. xxvi. 63.*—

himself, and an *Angel* from *Heaven*, continued to *Do* under the *Gospel*: * *What*, being duly performed, is for the *honour* of *God*, and the *benefit* of *Mankind*; but, being * *utterly* forbidden, must turn very much to the detriment of the *World*: As it cannot be *in its self* evil, so neither was it ever intended to have been *abolish'd* by our *blessed LORD* as such.

19. But what then shall we say to this *Passage* of *St. Matthew*, *swear not at all*? Can any thing be more *express*? Or could our *Saviour* have spoken more *plainly*, had he *design'd* to have *done*, what some pretend he *has done*?

20. To this I answer, and it is the next consideration I have to offer for the clearing of this Difficulty, (2^{dly}) That it is not enough that the *Words* of any *Prohibition* are *general*, to oblige us to understand it in the utmost extent that the *Expressions* are capable of: But we must withal consider, what it is *reasonable* to *suppose* was *design'd* to have been *forbidden* by them.

21. For proof of which *Remark*, let us look back only to the 21st *Vers*e of this *Chapter*; where we meet with a *Case* not very different from that before us. *Ye have heard*, says our *Saviour*, *that it has been said by them of old times, Thou shalt not kill*. And in the 22th of *Exodus*, the *Command* is absolute and express, *Thou shalt not kill*. And some, we know, have been so very tender as to imagine, that it is no less unlawful, in any *Case*, and upon any *Pretence*, to *put a Man to Death*, than others have thought

thought it to be to *take an Oath*. And yet at the same time that that *Prohibition* was delivered to the *Jews*, God himself establish'd the *Power of Life and Death* in the *Civil Magistrate*; and in one of the first *Laws* that was given to Mankind, declared, *That whoso shed Man's Blood, by Man should his Blood be shed*ⁿ.

22. To know therefore how far we are to extend the force of any *Prohibition*; we must consider, not only how *general* the *Letter* of the *Law* is, but what were the *Occasion*, and *Design*, of making of it. Now the *End* of the *sixth Commandment* was to restrain *private Violence*; and to tie up Mens Hands from rashly *assaulting*, and *hurting* of one another. And therefore to *private Persons*, and in all the *common Circumstances of Life*, the Command is absolute, and admits of no restriction; *Thou shalt not kill*. But in the *publick Administration of Justice*; in defence of a *Man's own Life*; in a *lawful War*, where the welfare and security of our Country are at stake; in these Cases, as the *design* of the *Law* is not concern'd, so neither must the *meaning* of it be extended to them.

23. And so it is in the Point before us: *Swear not at all*, says our blessed Saviour. But in what Cases? And after what manner? Why not on every *slight occasion*; nay not on *any occasion*, where, without violating the Bonds of *Justice* and *Charity*, you can avoid the doing of it. And

ⁿ Gen. ix. 6.

even there where you cannot, yet *swear not at all after the manner* that the *Jews* were wont to do; for whose correction our *Saviour*, as I shall presently shew, deliver'd the *Prohibition*, of which we are now speaking.

24. And this brings me to the (3^d) and last thing I have to observe, for the clear understanding of the *Words* before us; and that is this; that if we will come to a right apprehension of our *Saviour's Intention* in them, we must examine what there was *amiss* in the *common Practice* of the *Jews*, as to *this Matter*; and by that we shall be able the more easily to judge, what is *forbidden* to us in it.

25. Now the *Faults* of the *Jews* as to this *Point of Swearing*, were these: 1st. ° That they allow'd themselves to *swear*, almost upon *any Occasion*, tho' never so *vain* and *impertinent*; provided only that they did not *swear* by the *sacred Name of God*; which they agreed, was not to be taken into their *Mouths* but upon some *great Occasion*, and with a *due regard* had to the *honour* of it. But that which was yet worse, was, 2^{dly}: P That they supposed that by *many* of those

° Vid. *Philon.* πειρῶν τὸ ἐν ἱερὲς Νόμον: p. 769, 780. — See Dr. *Lightfoot's Exercit.* on *St. Matth.* in *Loc.* p. 148, 149. fol. Inasmuch that *Aben-Ezra* accounted this to have been one of those sins, for which God delay'd the coming of the *Messiah*. Vid. in *Decalog.*

P So *St. August. de Serm. Dom. in mont.* l. i. c. 17. *Lightfoot,* *Loc. cit.* p. 149. And on *Mār. xxiii.* 16. *Muscul.* in *Loc. Voss. Hist. Pelag.* p. 522. Nay in the *Talmud* its self, *Tit. Shebnoth,* there

those *lesser Oaths*, they were not so strictly *obliged* to *speak*, and *act*, according to the *Intention* of them; but that they might, without being *forsworn*, either *dissemble* their *Knowledge*, or *neglect* their *Promises*, which they confirm'd only by such *Oaths* as these.

26. That these were the *Measures* by which the *Jews* govern'd themselves, as to this *Matter*, both their own ancient *Writers* tell us; and our *Saviour* himself, in part, declares to us. And I need not say any thing to shew, that the *design* of all this was to avoid the *obligation* of the *third Commandment*; to the *due observance* whereof, our *Saviour* therefore, in this place, intended to *reduce* his *Disciples*.

27. Now to this end, 1st: That he might the better keep up the reverence of an *Oath*, he expressly *forbids* that *customary* and *familiar Use*, which the *Jews* had been wont to make of it. *I say unto you, swear not at all; neither by Heaven, for it is God's Throne; nor by the Earth, for it is his Footstool; nor by Jerusalem,*

there is this express *Assertion*: *Qui Jurat per Cælum & Terram, Liber est; sed qui jurat per Dei Nomina, tenetur.* Hornb. contr. Jud. cap. de Juram:— And indeed what strange ways they have at this very day of avoiding the obligation of an *Oath*, is notorious: See to this purpose *Fagius* on *Exod. xxiii.* *Buxtorf, Lex. Rabb.* in שבע: *Pug. fid.* pag. 730. from their own *Authors*. In short, it was upon both these *Accounts* that *Martial* fell so severely upon them in that *Epigram*, l. ix. 95. And which sufficiently shews, both how ready they were to *swear*, by those *lesser Forms* here mention'd; and how little they thought themselves *obliged* by them.

9 See Mat. v. 35, 36. xxiii. 16, &c. See the foregoing *Notes*.

for

for it is the City of the Great King. That is, swear not at all after ^r that way that the Jews were wont so readily to do; nor in such ^s Cases, in which they therefore made use of these lesser Forms of Swearing, because they thought it neither decent, nor lawful, to swear by the most holy Name of God.

28. Now that which yet more confirms to us the reasonableness of this Interpretation, is, that our Saviour himself, in the prosecution of this very Subject, plainly restrains his Discourse to the same Cases, in which the Jews were wont to use those Forms of Swearing, which he here mentions. But let your Communication, says he, be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay. That is, in your private Discourse, and Affairs, with one another; let it suffice you, instead of Swearing after the manner of the Jews here reprov'd, barely to affirm, or deny, what you have to say: Or at the most to add some innocent Asseveration to it, for the farther satisfaction of him to whom you speak; for whatsoever is more than this, cometh of evil.

29. And thus far it was undoubtedly the design of our Saviour to forbid the Practice of Swearing altogether; and to declare it, in such Cases, to be utterly evil and unlawful. And therefore, as to what concerns this kind of Swearing; (to which both the Practice of the Jews

^r See Heinsius: In Loc. Calvin. Harm. in Loc.

^s i. e. Voluntary Oaths: For in all such as were imposed by Authority, they were not permitted to swear otherwise than by the Name of God.

here intended to be *corrected*; and the Instances given of the *Oaths* which they made *use* of; and the *direction* of our *Saviour* how to *behave* our selves on *such Occasions*, do all evidently *refer*;) the *Prohibition* is *universal*, and admits of *no exception*; *I say unto you, swear not at all*: no not tho' what you *swear* be never so *true*, or you should be never so much *provok'd* to *swear* to it.

30. But indeed, I am apt to believe that our *Saviour* intended somewhat more than this, in his *Prohibition* as to this Matter: And that, because the *Abuses* which the *Jews* are charged with in this particular, required somewhat more to be done for the security of that *Commandment*, which he was here concern'd to *restore* to its *full Force*. And that is this: That because such is the nature of Mankind, that we are but too apt to trifle with the most sacred Things; as we see the *Jews*, in the Case before us, most notoriously did; who for that reason set up the *lesser* kind of *Swearing* here mentioned, that so they might both the more *freely use* it, and the more *easily break thro'* the *Obligation* of it: Therefore our *Saviour* resolved, at once, to prevent all future *Corruption* of this kind, by utterly *forbidding*
Men

* So Hierome, in Loc. Epiphan. Hær. xix. thus speaks of this passage: Ἐγὼ δὲ ὡς τὸ τῶν τοιούτων διαπίσται τὸ χύμα, διὰ τὸ μὴ εἶναι τίνος λέγειν ἐν ἁλλοῖς δόμασιν ὅταν προβάλλεθαι. But above any St. Cyril admirably explains and confirms this, *Lib. vi. de Ador. in Sp. & Ver. p. 212.* And affirms it to have been a great part of our *Saviour's* design in this very passage. For having shewn, that we should *avoid* all *Swearing*, as much as may be; he adds, that if

Men to swear any otherwise, than by the *Name of God* only.

31. And if this be allow'd, then here we shall again have another good account of the *universality* of our Saviour's Prohibition as to this matter. *I say unto you, swear not at all; that is, not at all by Heaven, or by the Earth, or by any other the like Forms: But when you shall find it needful to swear, swear directly by the Name of God; and then you will both the more rarely do it; and when you shall do it, will be the more likely to swear truly, and to perform to the LORD your Oaths.*

32. From what has been said, we may now see what that Swearing is, which our blessed Lord has forbidden as unlawful to us Christians: Namely, *First, To swear at all in our common and private Affairs with one another; when there is neither any suitable Occasion for it, nor any necessity laid upon us so to do. And, Secondly, To use those little, affected Modes of*

we must needs swear, "Ορκίζω ἑσὺ Θεός, μὴ τὸ ἑτέρον Ὄνομα παρονομιζέσθω πᾶν. And then he goes on to shew how contrary to this the Practice of the Jews was; and how our Saviour labour'd to correct this Error, p. 213. Ἀλλὰ τὴν τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἡλιθιωτάτην ἐννοίαν κατεκρινεν ὁ Σωτὴρ, μὴ δεῖν ὑπὸν μνασθῆναι λέγων, μᾶλλον ἐν τῷ ἑσθῶν, &c. Ἀ γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι λατρεύοντες ἱερὰ καὶ ταῦτα χρησίμως ἰσχυρῶς ἐρεθίζοντο, πανταχῇ κατὰ πλάσαν, καὶ ἐκ οἷοι ὅθεν ἐξουσιάζοντο, ἐλάττων αὐτῶν τὸ εἶναι τέτοις ἐνυλαβείας. And having farther shewn the grounds of this Restraint, he thus concludes, p. 214. Ἐσὺ τοις ἁγίοις τὸ ναὶ καὶ τὸ οὐ. ὡς οὖν τοῖς ἀρετὰ βίβη ἡγεμένοις ὅρα καὶ χρῆσθαι τὸ καὶ δυναμικῶς — Εἰ δὲ ἀτιμάζοιτο πρὸς τινος τὸ ναὶ, καὶ τὸ οὐ, τὸ ὅρκον ἢ χρῆσθαι τὸ ἡσυχάζειν ἢ ἐπὶ τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἢ καὶ ἡμᾶς, μᾶλλον δὲ ἢ καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν κτίσιν.

Swearing,

Swearing, which Custom or Design had brought in among the *Jews*, and which are still but too much allow'd of among us at this day: By both which, the *Majesty* of God is profan'd; *Perjury* is encreas'd; *Faith* and *Confidence* are lessen'd among Men; and their *immortal Souls* are continually exposed to ruin and destruction. I shall therefore make a few *practical Reflections*, upon each of these *Kinds of Swearing*; and so conclude this *Chapter*.

33. And, *First*: As to the *Case of light and customary Swearing*, it is certain, that for a Man to swear in his common, ordinary *Conversation*, where there is either no need at all of an Oath, or none that is proportionable to that *Reverence* which ought to be paid to it, is absolutely evil and unlawful. It is indeed to profane the sacredness, and to prostitute the design, of an Oath: And puts such an affront upon God, as we would be ashamed to put upon one of our *Fellow-Creatures*.

34. And yet, alas! How ordinary a Practice is this among us? And how often do we see Men call God to *Witness*, not only without need, but with such little regard too; that I am afraid many times they do not know themselves when they do so?

35. Nay and well were it for them if they did this only upon too *light Occasions*: But very frequently they do it upon such as are extremely

✓ See this Argument managed by St. Athanasius, with great Elegance, *Lib. de Passion, & Cruce Dom.* Tom. 1. p. 995.

indecent, if not sinful. To bear witness to their Lewdness, their Profaneness, and their Debauchery. To bind Obligations of Iniquity upon their Souls: And to confirm their Envious, their Malicious, and covetous Purposes, against their Neighbour.

36. These are, God knows, very terrible Considerations: They make me even tremble at the mention of them. And yet thus is *God's Name profaned* without horror; and we suffer it without concern.

37. But I must go yet farther: For tho' this be that *Swearing* which our *Saviour* seems chiefly to have spoken against in this place; yet I doubt not but that much more is required of us. And therefore I add, 2^{dly}. That as a Man ought *never to swear*, but upon some *great and solemn Occasion*; so neither should he *swear, of choice*, even then; nor till he has first endeavour'd, as far as is fitting to avoid it.

38. It was the Opinion of a *Heathen^m Moralist*, that a good Man ought never to *swear* but upon one of these *two* Accounts; either to *serve his Friend*, or to *vindicate himself* from some *foul and scandalous Aspersions*.

39. Tho' in this, I think, he was too severe; yet as, I presume, there are not many Cases in which a Man ought *voluntarily to swear*; so, I believe this one *general Rule* may comprehend the most of them: Namely, That we should ne-

^m *Isocrat. ad Demonium.*

ver do it, but when it is necessary, either for *God's Glory*; our *Own Justification*; or our *Neighbours Good*. But as for any other Considerations, I am persuaded, that it were better a Man should *sit down* under any tolerable *Inconvenience*, than flee to an *Oath* for the *prevention* of it.

40. And this I say as to the Case of *voluntary Oaths*: As for those which are *imposed* by *Publick Authority*, the *Subjects Rule* must be to yield to them in all *honest* and *lawful Matters*; and to take such as he can, with a good Conscience, take. As for the *reasonableness* of *requiring* them, that is their business to consider who *oblige* us to the *taking* of them: And who ought to remember that they shall assuredly answer to God for it, if by imposing them *too often*, and upon *too slight Occasions*; where neither the *necessity* of *Government*, nor the *Publick Peace*, require the *doing* of it; they shall cause *God's Name* to be *profaned*; shall *burden* their *Neighbours Conscience*; and, by degrees, *take off* very much from the *Religion* and *Reverence* of *Swearing*.

41. But 3^{dly}: and to conclude these sort of *Remarks*. As the *Commandment* here refer'd to by our Saviour, *Thou shalt not forswear thy self*; and expounded by that additional *Paraphrase*, *but shalt perform to the LORD thine Oaths*; has ever been look'd upon to relate ^z more

^z See *Grot. in Loc. & Explic. Decal. Exod. xx. 7.*

especially to *promissory Oaths*; in which the *danger of Perjury* is much the greatest, and there will therefore need the greatest *Care and Circumspection* to be used, in order to the *prevention* of it: So am I apt to think, upon all these *Accounts*, that we ought to look upon our selves as yet more concern'd to avoid *such kind of Oaths*, as far as it may be in our power so to do, rather than *any others*.

42. A wise Man will oblige himself, as seldom as he can, by a *bare Promise*: Because he cannot tell what may happen; nor to what *Inconveniences* he may expose himself, by the making of it. And surely much less ought a *good Man* to bind a *Promise* upon himself by an *Oath*; unless it be upon some *urgent Occasion*, in which he shall account it to be his *Duty* so to do.

43. And this may suffice to have been observed, with relation to the *First* thing here forbidden; *viz.* the *frequent, and unnecessary, and unworthy usage* of an *Oath*. As for the *other Case* proposed; I mean the abstaining from those *lesser Modes of Swearing* here *referr'd* too; and, I believe, *forbidden* too by our *Saviour*: It may be consider'd;

44. 1st: That tho' it should be *doubtful* whether it be *simply, and absolutely, unlawful* to make use of them; yet it *cannot* be *questioned* but that it must be much *safer not to do so*: Nor can there be any *reason* given, why a *wise and good Man* should *ever venture* upon the use of them.

45. That

45. That it must be much *safer* to *abstain altogether* from them, is manifest from hence, that it is (at least) *probable* that our *blessed Lord* did intend, in this place, to restrain the *use* of them: I am sure no one can ever shew, upon any good Grounds, and such as may justify a Man's Conscience in the allowance of them, that he did not.

46. And then, for the *other part* of my *Assertion*; that there can be no reason for a *good Man* to *venture* upon the *use* of them, it is evident; because, those things which, in such a Case, a Man *swears by*, must be consider'd either as relating to God, and terminating the Oath in him; and^y then, to *swear* by them, is the same thing as to *swear* by *God himself*; and to prostitute such Oaths to a *common Usage*, is as criminal as to profane the very *Name of God*: Or if they are *uncapable* of being thus *referr'd* to God, and for that reason may be thought *not* to *oblige*; then is the *use* of them *vain* and *devisory*; and so either *no End at all*; or, to be sure, *no good one*, can be design'd by them.

47. But, 2^{dly}: Whatever becomes of this Reflection, thus much is certain; that to use any of these Oaths with the Intention of the *Jews*, here condemn'd by our *Saviour*; that is to say, for the Promotion either of *common* and *vain Swearing*, on the one hand; or of *fraudulent* and *deceitful Swearing*, on the other; or to re-

^y So our Saviour determines it, *Mat. xxiii. 16, &c.*

cur to *such kind of Oaths in any Case*, in which we should not think it *decent*, or *lawful*, to *swear by God himself*, is *absolutely unlawful*; and *undoubtedly prohibited by Christ*, as such.

48. But here then I must not be mis-understood: For tho' I say that a good Christian ought not to *swear by any but God only*; yet I do not pretend that we must always do it with a *direct mention of his Name*; and in those *express Terms*,² which some have vainly thought *alone properly* to constitute an *Oath*. Many are the *Forms* into which the *Substance* of an *Oath* may be cast, and in several of them the *Name of God* not at all *express'd*; and yet the *Oath* be made by *him only*.

49. Thus *St. Paul*, tho' he generally mentioned the very *Name of God*, yet sometimes he put his *Oath* into another *Form*; and ²*protested by the Rejoicing which he had in Christ Jesus our Lord*, 1 Cor. xv. And when often times we our selves *lay our Hand* on the *Holy Scriptures*, and having first conceived the *Substance* of the *Oath*,

² *Augustin*, T. 2. Epist. 89. ad Hilar. Illi (sc. Pelagiani) quantum aliquos eorum audiivi, quid sit Juramentum prorsus ignorant. Putant enim se non Jurare quando in Ore habent scit Deus, &c. Quia non dicitur PER DEUM. Et de Verb. Apost. Serm. xxviii. cap. vi. Tom. x.

² That this was properly an *Oath*, *St. Augustine* stily contends, *Serm. de verb. Apost. xxviii. c. 5.* And refers to the propriety of the *Original Greek* for proof of it. But the *Syriac Version* is more express; and puts in, by way of explication, the very word, *I swear*. And yet others doubt of it, and think it to have only the *Form* of an *Oath*, without being really so. See *Basil*, in *Psal. xiv.* Tom. i. p. 133. E.

conclude

conclude with this Form, *So help me God, and the Contents of this Book*: We as really swear by God alone, as if we had altogether stopp'd in the former part of our appeal; or only said with the *Apostle, God is my Witness.*

50. In all these Cases, it is enough that we make it plain that we refer to God, and to *him only*, for the *Truth* of what we speak: And then howsoever our *Words* may run, the *Oath* will still be understood to *terminate* in *him alone*.

51. I SAY to God ONLY: Because otherwise tho' we should swear expressly by God, yet if we shall join any other together with him, as the *Jews* did sometimes heretofore, and as those of the *Church of Rome* do notoriously at this day: In such a Case, our *Oath* will again be faulty; and we shall, in the very manner of our *Swearing*, be guilty of a *Sin*, but little less criminal, than that of *Perjury* its self.

52. And thus have I offer'd to you such Considerations, as seem'd necessary to shew, what that *Swearing* is which our *Saviour* has truly forbidden under the Gospel. I shall conclude this Point, with those *Words* of the Son of Sirach, *Ecclus. xxiii. 9. Accustom not thy Mouth to Swearing, neither use thy self to the Naming of the Holy One. For as a Servant that is continually beaten, shall not be without a blew Mark; so he that sweareth, and nameth God, continually, shall not be faultless. He that useth much Swearing, shall be filled with Iniquity, and the Plague shall never depart from his House.*

C H A P. IV.

Of the several Ways of confirming what is spoken, or promised, under the degree of an Oath; how far they may be made use of in Mens Private Conversation? And for what reason it was not fitting that Men should have been allow'd to go any farther?

[But let your
Communica-
tion be Yea,
yea; Nay,
nay.]

I. **H**AVING now shewn, from the Words of our *blessed Saviour*, how careful a good *Christian* ought to be not only *not to forswear himself*; but, as far as he is able, *not to swear at all*: It remains, for the final clearing of this Subject, that we go on, upon the same *Principles*, to enquire, how *we are to behave our selves, in our common Discourse, with one another?* And here the *Rule* proposed to us is this; *let your Communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay*: And this reason given, why we ought to confine our selves within the bounds of it; *for, says our Saviour, whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil*. I shall distinctly consider each part of it; and endeavour, *First*, To shew you, what our *Duty*, with relation to this Matter, is: And then, *Secondly*, To convince you, of the *reasonableness* of that *Motive* which our blessed
Saviour

Saviour has here made use of, to oblige us to walk according thereunto.

2. And, *First*: For what concerns the *Rule* here laid down; It was the Opinion of a very learned^a Man in his Remarks upon this Passage; that these *Words* of our *Saviour*, *let your Communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay;* are to be expounded by those of St. *James*, to the same purpose, *Jam. v. 12. Let your Yea, be Yea; and your Nay, Nay*: And the account he gives of both of them is this; that our *Actions* should be agreeable to our *Expressions*; and that whensoever we *promise* any thing, we should be sure to take special care that our *performance* be accordingly.

3. Tho' this be, no doubt, the *Duty*, and should be the *Care*, of every good *Christian*; yet can I, by no means, think it a proper account of our *Saviour's* meaning in the *Words* before us: In which it was certainly his Intention to direct us, how to manage our selves in our^b *Discourse*, or as we render it, our *Communication*, with one another; and not how to conform our *Performances* to our *Promises*.

4. That St. *James* had a regard to this *Passage* of our *Saviour*, in that Exhortation which he gave to the same purpose, I make no doubt: Nor shall I deny, but that they may possibly have *both* of them meant the *same thing*. But that either the one, or the other, intended to re-

^a Grot. Com. in Loc.

^b ὁ λόγος ὑμῶν. Sermo vester.

strain the Doctrine here delivered concerning *Swearing*, to *Promissory Oaths* only; or indeed aim'd at any thing more than to shew us, how we should behave our selves in our *Conversation* with one another, does not appear from either of their *Expressions*; nor ought it, without reason, to be suppoed by us.

5. And therefore, 2^{dly}, and to come more closely to the *Explication* of the *Words* before us: As it is plain from the whole Tenour of our *Saviour's* Discourse in this place, that a good *Christian* may, without all scruple, *affirm* what is *true*, or *deny* what is *false*; so the least we can infer from the Repetition here made of the *Yea* and *Nay*, is this; ^c that if one *assertion*, or *denial*, of either, should not be sufficient to satisfy the Person with whom we converse, of the *Truth* of what we speak, we may *renew* our *Discourse*, and confirm it again and again to him: And by that means move him the rather to believe us, when he shall find us *constantly* to *persevere* in our *assertion*, or *denial*, of it.

6. Nor, indeed, can any Question be reasonably made of the *lawfulness* of our *doing thus much*, to satisfy the jealousy of our Neighbour, and to justify our own Fidelity. For if we may innocently declare what we know once, what harm can there be in doing it a second time? And if it be requisite that we should do so, to gain the better credit with our Brother; and to

^c So Dr. Hammond *Pract. Catech.* §. Of Swearing: And in his *Paraphrase* on the place.

convince him the more undoubtedly of the truth of what we say; seeing both the *End* for which we do it is *innocent*, and there is nothing *unlawful* in the *Act* its self; where can the *harm* of such a *Repetition* be?

7. This therefore is the least we can suppose our *Saviour* hereby intended to allow us to do, for the better *confirmation* of what we *promise*, or *assert*. And I cannot tell but that his *Words* may fairly be extended a great deal farther; and be understood, 3^{dly}; To allow us, if need be, not barely to *re-iterate* what we say, and thereby to fix the belief of it the more firmly in the mind of him with whom we converse; but that with some kind of ^d *earnestness* too in the *Repetition*: With some such *vehemence* of *Expression* as may serve to add a *new Force* to our *Words*; and effectually shew that we have both duly consider'd, and are very well assured of the *Truth* of what we *report*; or of our resolution to *fulfil* what we *promise*, in them.

8. This was the Method which our *blessed Saviour* himself commonly follow'd in his *own Conversation*: And frequent Instances we meet with of it, in all the parts of his Gospel. So in this very *Chapter*, *ſ. 18.* *Verily I ſay unto you.* And

^d So *Nic. Fuller*, *Miscell. Sacr.* l. i. c. 2.

^e And which tho' the learned *N. Fuller* seems reasonably enough to deny to be a *formal Oath*; yet he plainly proves it to be a *vehement Affeuration*: especially when *doubled*, as we often find it in our *Saviour's Discourses* to have been. See his *Miscell. Sacr.* Lib. i. cap. 2.

again, *ſ. 26. Verily I ſay unto thee.* And that this may reasonably be presumed, to have been allow'd us in the present *Paſſage*, we may conclude from hence; not only that this is the *leaſt degree of Assurance* we can give to the *Truth* of what we ſay, above that of a *ſimple delivery* of it; and neither *cometh of evil*, nor *tendeth to it*: But that the very *Expressions* themſelves which we render *Yea*, and *Nay*, do import, not a bare *Aſſertion*, or *Denial*; but that with ſome ſuch *vehemence* as this. Inſomuch that in the Holy Scriptures themſelves, we find the word which we render *Yea*, made uſe of inſtead of an *Aſſertion*; and by our own Interpreters *translated* accordingly. ⁸ And even where it is not ſo, yet the Diſcourſe its ſelf ſhews, that there is ſomewhat more than a meer *Aſſertion* deſigned by it; as might eaſily be made appear, in ſeveral *Examples*, were it needful to inſiſt upon it.

9. Let us add to this, that in the *Stile* of the ſacred Penmen, the *repetition* of any *Word*, generally denotes ſomewhat of a *Vehemence* deſigned

^f *Nai*, and *Amen*, are in Scripture indifferently put for each other. So what in *Mat. xxiii. 36.* is *Ἀμὴν*: in *Luke xi. 51.* is *Nai*. In *Rev. xxii. 20.* They are join'd together to the ſame purpoſe: And ſo they are again, *2 Cor. i. 20.* And in the *lxx.* what the Hebrew calls *אמת* in *Truth*, or *Verily*, they render *Nai*: Inſomuch that *Theophylact*, on *Mat. v. 18.* *Verily I ſay unto you*, explains it by, *Yea*: *Τὸ Ἀμὴν βεβαιωτικόν ἐστίν, ἀλλ' ὅτι, Ναι λέγω ὑμῖν.* And *Vatabl.* here renders it, *Certe, Certe.*

^g See *Mat. xi. 9.* *Luke xii. 5.* *Rev. i. 7.* *xvi. 7.*

^h A plain Inſtance of which we have in *2 Kings. x. 15.* where when *Jehu* ask'd *Jehonadab* whether his heart were truly with him;

signed by it. Hence it is that our *Saviour* does not only commonly make use of the *Asseveration* before mention'd; but when he would imprint what he said, in a more particular manner, upon Mens minds, and engage them to a more serious consideration of it; *doubles* it too; *Verily, Verily, I say unto you*. From all which put together, we may, I think, safely conclude, that we also, after the *Example* of our *blessed Master*, may not only with great *plainness* and *earnestness* affirm the *Truth* of what we speak; but may, if need be, add some such *Asseveration* to it, as he was wont to do; and even fairly interpret the very *Words* before us, to allow of it.

10. From what has been said, it appears; either that such *Asseverations* as those I have now been speaking of, do expressly fall *within* the *Design* of the *present Text*, (and that some have thought to be the more probable;) or most certainly, ⁱ are *not repugnant* to it. But now, ^{thly} 4: And to advance yet one step higher: What shall we say to another sort of Confirmation, frequent-

him; he answer'd, *ὡν ὡν*, *It is*, and *It is*. And to this both the *Chaldæe* and *Syriac* Versions hold; expressing the Repetition; tho' we, with the *Greek* and *Latin* neglect it. And the design of this take from two persons, very well versed in those Languages; *Duplicatur EST*, says *Munster*, ad *Majorem Rei Affirmationem*. *Geminatone verbi vehementius Affirmat*, says *Vatablus*; q. d. *Proculdubio diligo te ex Animo*.

ⁱ See *Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. vii*. Where shewing that his *Ἰωάννης*, or *Perfect Christian*, ought not to swear, he thus informs him (from the *present Text*) how he should behave himself: *Ἀρεῖ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἡτοι τῇ συνουσίᾳ, ἢ τῇ ἀντιφάσει, προσθέτω τὸ Ἀληθὺς λέγω, εἰς παύσασιν τῇ μὴ διορίσας αὐτῷ τὸ βίβανον τῇ ἀνεπίστατον*. Pag. 729. B.

ly made use of heretofore, and not uncommon with us at this day; whereby to convince Men of the *Truth* of what we say; and that is, by pledging (as it were) somewhat which is very valuable to us, for the certainty of it.

11. This is that kind of Confirmation, which, as distinguished from the fore-going, is usually called ^k *Obtestation*: And it differs from an *Oath* in this; that an *Oath* has always a *respect* to God, and either *expressly*, or *by construction*, denotes an *appeal to him* for the *Truth* of what we utter: Whereas, in the Way I am now speaking of, we only interpose the Authority of somewhat, which is either *evidently Certain*, or *apparently Dear* to us; to bespeak our *Sincerity* in what we deliver under the *Caution* of it.

12. Such a Ratification as this is that which we meet with so commonly in the *Old Testament*, ^l *As thy Soul liveth*. And it has been thought by some, that *Joseph* really did no more than this, when he seem'd to ^m *swear* to his Brethern, *by the Life of Pharaoh*, Gen. xlii. 15. And as for the *New Testament*; ⁿ What if that *Form of Speech* made use of by *St. Paul*, 1 Cor. xv. 31. and which some, as we have seen, will have to be an *Oath*, was indeed no more than an *Obtesta-*

^k See *Saunders. de Juram. Oblig. Pral. v. §. 4.*

^l 1 Sam. i. 26. xvii. 55.

^m *Vid. Saunders. de Jur. Oblig. Pral. v. §. 7.* Of which Opinion also was *St. Basil*, in *Psal. xiv.*

ⁿ See below.

tion: I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our LORD. At least I cannot but think, that those ° Primitive Christians, of whom Tertullian speaks, meant no more; who refused to swear by the Fortune, or Genius, of their Emperors; lest they should seem to appeal to the Deities of the Heathen: But yet freely gave assurance of their Fidelity to them by their Health and Safety, which (as he expresses it) was very dear to them; and equal, in their account, to the greatest Oath.

13. That such kind of Confirmations as these, of the Truth of what we speak, may (upon occasion) not only innocently, but commendably, be made use of, for the better prevention of downright Swearing, is, I think, not to be doubted: But yet I cannot tell, whether they may be reckon'd to fall within the direct allowance of the present Text, tho' they are certainly P consistent with the design of it. And therefore, I do suppose that next to Formal-Swearing, these

° Vid. Tertul. Apolog. cap. 32. 'Tis true he there says expressly, Juramus—per salutem; but then he afterwards speaks more precisely, Pro magno Juramento id habemus. And Athanasius, mentioning the Oath of Syrianus to Constantius the Emperor, says not that he swore, but confirm'd his Promise to the Alexandrians, Διεβεβαίωσατο μαρτυρῶμεν τῷ σὺν σωτηρίαν, Apol. ad Constant. Tom. i. p. 689. But St. Basil is express to this purpose, in Psal. xiv. Tom. i. Ἐστὶ δὲ τινες Λόγοι, ἡμᾶς μὲν ὁρκῶν ἔχοντες, ἔχ' ὁρκοὶ δὲ ὄντες, ἀλλὰ θεοσέπεια πρὸς τὰς ἀκρότητας, ὡς ὁ Ἰωσήφ τῷ Αἰγύπτῳ οἰκοῖται, Νὴ τῷ Ὑγίαν ὤμνυε Φαριζαῖος. Καὶ ὁ Ἀπόστολος τῷ πρὸς Κορινθίους Ἀγάπῳ ἐαυτὸν παραιτῶν, ἔφη, Νὴ τῷ ἡμετέρῳ καύχησιν ἢ ἔχω ἐν Χριστῷ, &c. p. 133.

P So (St. Basil, loc. cit. who therefore excuses St. Paul, as not contradicting our Saviour Christ.

kind of *Obtestations* ought the *most rarely*, and with the *greatest caution*, to be made use of by us.

14. But if the Matter be weighty ; and if it be needful to do somewhat more than ordinary to convince the Person with whom we discourse, of the Truth of what we speak ; and if such a *lesser Ratification* of it, will prevent our recurring to the *last and highest*, I mean, that of an *Oath* : I cannot see why we should not rather chuse to pledge our *own Honesty or Truth* ; or to corroborate what we say, by comparing the certainty of it, with somewhat of which there can be no doubt ; such as *our own*, or *his Life* with whom we *converse* ; rather than accustom our selves to *call God to witness* in any Case, in which it may lie in our power to avoid it.

15. And thus have I done with the several kinds of *Confirmation* of what we affirm, *below the degree* of an *Oath*. I cannot tell whether it may be needful for me to take notice of yet another *Method*, which has but too much obtain'd in the World, to the same purpose : And that is, 5^{thly}, When to *assert the Truth* of what they speak, Men flee to some *Curse*, or *Imprecation upon themselves*, if they *prevaricate* in it. But as every *Oath* does in its Nature imply an *Appeal* to the *Justice of God*, as well as to his *Knowledge* ; and, by consequence, does infer a ^a*Tacit Imprecation* of his *Vengeance* upon us, if

^a Plutarch, Κεφ. Ρωμ. Vol. I. p. 491. Πᾶς ὅστις εἰς καλὰ ἔργα τελευτᾷ τὴν ἐπιτομήν.

we deal *falsly* with our *Neighbour*: So thus much we may be sure of, that were such *Imprecations*, otherwise, never so *lawful* in order to this end; yet they ought not to be *used* at *any time*, or upon *any occasion*, in which we may not lawfully take an *Oath*. And therefore that both out of *Charity* to our *Selves*, and out of *Reverence* to *God's Judgments*; we ought to lay aside the *Practice* of such *Curses* altogether: Seeing they can neither be ever made without horreur; nor may be made in any *Case*, wherein we may not give our *Oath*, with an *equal Satisfaction* to our *Neighbour*, and with greater *Decency*, and *Conformity*, to the *Principles* of *Christianity*.

16. And now, to lay together, in short, the several Rules, by which we are to govern our selves in our *Communication* with one another; according as I have hitherto been more largely stating of them to you.

17. If what we say be a *Matter* of *meer indifference*; so that it is of no great consequence, either to our selves, or any other, whether we are believed or no: In that *Case* it may suffice * *barely* to *relate* what we *know* of it; without troubling our selves, by any of the *Ways* I have before been speaking of, to give any farther *Confirmation* to it.

18. If our Discourse be of such a nature, that it may *concern* our *Neighbour* to give *credit* to it; or it may, perhaps, upon our *own account*, be *convenient* that he should do so: We may then

confirm the *Truth* of what we assert, either by a * *repeated Assurance* of it; or, if that will not suffice, by adding such an * *Asseveration* as may shew that we speak very *seriously*, and with a *well-grounded Confidence* of what we say: Such as *Verily*, or *Indeed*, or *In-Truth* you may *Believe* me; or by some other Expressions of the like nature.

19. If this does not yet satisfy the Mind of our Neighbour, and the Subject of our Discourse be so important as to demand a still *higher Conviction* of the *Truth* of it; then, *Thirdly*, I conceive we may proceed to a yet higher and more forcible *Confirmation* of what we say, by that more *weighty kind* of *Assurance*, which, if not comprehended under the Expressions of the *present Passage*, is yet certainly within the *Reason*, and may be built upon the *Grounds* of it. Such are those * *Obtestations* so usual among our selves, *Upon my Word*; *if I am Alive*; *As I am an honest Man*, and the like. And such was that of St. Paul heretofore, 2 Cor. xi. 10. *As the Truth of Christ is in Me*. Only as these are still greater *Corroborations* of the *Truth* of what we speak than the other; so ought they to be used *more seldom*, and with *greater care*, and upon more *weighty Occasions*; when 'tis very highly expedient that we should be believed in what we say.

20. And here we must stop in our *Communication with one another*. For the next *Degree* of *Assurance*, above this, is an *Oath*: And that I have

have already shewn you, must very *rarely* be made use of; indeed *never* but when we either *cannot* by any means, *avoid* it, or the *Matter* is such that we ought not to *decline* it.

21. Which being thus resolved, in answer to the *first thing* I proposed to consider; let us go on, in the next place, to see what the *Import* of that *Motive* is which our *Saviour* here proposes to us, to engage us to keep within these *Bounds*, in our *common Affairs* with one another; and that is, That *whatsoever is more than these cometh of Evil*.

[For whatsoever is more than these cometh of Evil.]

22. It has been doubted by some whether what we render *cometh of Evil*, might not more properly have been translated, '*cometh of the Evil-One*. But as the *Original* is certainly capable of *either of these Senses*; so the *Assertion* of our *Saviour* will hold good in *both of them*: The *Custom of Vain-Swearing* being altogether *wicked* and *unreasonable*; and not only proceeding from an *Evil Principle*, but in its nature, tending to an *Evil End* too; *and upon all these Accounts coming from the *EVIL-ONE*.

23. And *First*; *Whatsoever is more than these cometh of Evil*: And that whether we respect * *Our Selves*, or * *Others*; * *The Custom of Making*, or the * *Cause of Requiring an Oath*, for the Confirmation of what we say.

† So Castalio: *Episcopus*, &c.

24. If we consider the Grounds of *Common-Swearing* with respect to * *Our-Selves*: It must proceed either from an * *Evil-Custom*, or from an * *Evil-Principle*; and upon *both* those *Accounts*, be utterly *wicked* and *unjustifiable*.

25. For (1st.) As to the * *Custom* of such *Swearing*; we know that every *Sin* is by so much the more *heinous* in *its self*, and more *dangerous* to our *Souls*; by how much the *Habit* of it is the more *deeply rooted* in us. Infomuch that it is from this that a Man takes his *Denomination*; and is look'd upon to be either a *Good*, or a *Bad Man*, according as the *common Practice* of his *Life* bespeaks him to be.

26. The best Christian may be tempted, and fall into Sin; and sometimes do that which he ought not to do. But yet whilst this is not his *Custom*; whilst the *general Bent* of his Desires, and Endeavours, and even of his Actions, and Conversation too, lie towards his Duty; neither will God exact every such Sin of him, nor ought Men to censure him too severely for them. For this is the Misfortune * of our present State, and while we are in this World, will always be so; that in *many Things* we shall offend *All*.*

27. But when once any *Sin* becomes *habitual*, and Men make a *common*, or rather a *constant*, *Practice* of it: The very *custom* of it renders such a Sin *unpardonable* by God, and justly *censurable* by all good Men.

* James iii. 2.

28. So that supposing then that *common* and *vain Swearing* are *sinful*; as both our *Saviour* here warrants us, and I have before shewn, we ought to account it: The *Custom* of such *Swearing* must be yet *more Evil*; and the *Sin* not the *less*, but the *greater*, for proceeding from it.

29. But indeed before Men can arrive to such a *Custom*, there must be in them some *evil Principle* or other to give Birth to it: And *such Swearing* must, upon this account also, *come of Evil*, that it must be derived from some *Source* that most certainly is so.

30. For since *such Swearing* is not only plainly *forbidden* in the *Gospel*, but is withal, in its own nature, so *indecent*, and *unfitting*; that 'tis impossible for any Man who has either any true *value* for *God*, or has ever seriously consider'd the *meaning* of an *Oath*, to approve of it: Certain it is, that that Man must be either very negligent of himself, and very unsensible of his *Duty*; or he must be become altogether wicked and profane, who allows himself in the *customary practice* of it. And from which soever of these *Principles* his *Swearing* does proceed, what our *Saviour* here tells us of it will remain true, that it *cometh of Evil*.

31. Nor will this Usage be found to fall any less under the *same Character*, if we shall consider it with respect to *those* who *require* such *Oaths* of *Others*, and prompt Men on to the *Practice* of them.

32. For since to *encourage* another to *Sin*, but much more to *require* what is *Evil* of him, must be highly criminal; as being both contrary to the *Duty* which we *owe* to *God*, and to that *Charity* which we ought to have for our *Neighbour's Soul*: Certain it is, that no one who looks upon it to be unlawful to *Swear vainly*, can, without *Sin*, *allow*, much *less encourage*, and *oblige*, another so to do. And therefore it must remain, that upon this Account also, as well as upon those I have already mentioned, this Practice must be confessed to *come of Evil*.

33. But, indeed, were it not for the *Evil*, that is to say the *wickedness* of *Men*; there would be neither any *need* of *Swearing* at all, nor any *Temptation* to it. And this will yet more verify our *Saviour's* Assertion; and shew that the very Ground and Foundation not only of *false* and *vain Swearing*, but of *all Swearing whatsoever*, cometh of *Evil*.

34. Now that I thus make out. The only solid Reason that can be given why Men should ever *swear at all*, is upon the account of its usefulness, or rather necessity, for the *Confirmation* of what they say. But now were it not for the *Corruption* of our *Nature*, and that *Falseness* and *Insincerity*, which so much abounds in the World; and for those *Jealousies* and *Suspensions*, which Men have entertain'd of one another upon the account of it; where would be the *need*

† See Chap. ii. §. 18. *Add. Isidor. Pelusiot. Epist. 155. Lib. I.*

of any such *Confirmation*? Were there no such thing as *Malice*, or *Envy*; *Interest*, or *Design*; *Covetousness*, or *Injustice*; *Lying*, or *Dissimulation*, known among us: But, on the contrary, every one was *Honest* and *Ingenuous*; and might *securely* be *trusted* by his Neighbour, as such. In short, were our Condition so happy; that Men reckon'd their *Word*, as sacred as their *Oath*; and would be as careful of what they *said*, as of what they *swore*?

35. But because, God knows, the Case is much otherwise with us; and Men are so full of *Tricks* and *Cheats*; are so *subtle* and *deceitful*, so *vain* and *unconstant*, that we know not where to have them, or when to rely upon them; and it is hard to find out any *Bond* that is sufficient to assure us that they *act sincerely*; therefore it has been found necessary to *recur* to this *Obligation*: That if there be any *fear of God*, or any *sense of Goodness* remaining to them, they may by this means, at least, be engaged to *deal uprightly*; and not presume to *call God to witness*, but when they are resolved to *speak* and *act* as they *ought to do*.

36. And now when such is the Ground of our *appealing to God at all*; when 'tis the *wickedness* and *falseness* of Mankind that has given *occasion* to the *use of an Oath*; and without which there would never have been any need of it: Well may our *Saviour* give this for his Reason why all honest and good Men should decline *Swearing*, as much as they can, *that it cometh of Evil*;

that

that is, was found out as a *remedy* to the *Evil* of our Natures, and to secure the *Truth* of *false* and *insincere Men*. * For sure a better, or more sensible *Motive* cannot be offer'd to engage such Persons to abstain from it, than this; that it 'tis an *affront* to their *Honesty*, a *scandal* upon their *Integrity*: At least that it is a *Tie* which was never intended for Men of their *Character*; nor can be allow'd by them, without seeming to own, that they are not so *faithful*, and *ingenuous*, as they would be thought to be.

37. But *Secondly*: As the *Practice* of *Swearing*, especially in our *common Dealing*, and *Conversation* with one another, howsoever it be consider'd, *cometh of Evil*; so, to complete the Iniquity of it, will it be found to *tend* also unto *Evil*: And upon that Account, as well as upon those already mention'd, *to come from the Evil One*. And that especially in these (3.) *Respects*: As it is apt,

- (1.) To give an *evil Example* to *Others*.
- (2.) To take off from the *reverence* of an *Oath*; and from the *due regard* which ought to be had to it. And,
- (3.) In the *Consequence* thereof, to lead Men into a *general Profaneness*; into an *unconcerned-*

* See this Consideration urged by *Phot. Epist. I. p. 34.* And *St. Basil* thus uses the same Argument: *Ἀίχρην γὰρ παντὶ καὶ τῷ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τῷ ἄλλῳ ὡς ἀναξίως πίστεως, καὶ τῷ ἐν τῷ ὅρκῳ ἀσφαλείαν ἐπιφέρει.* In *Psalm xiv. Tom. I. p. 133. D.*

ness for, if not into a *contempt* of, whatsoever is *sacred*.

38. And (1st.) The *common Practice* of *Swearing*, *tendeth* to *Evil*; inasmuch as it is *apt* to give an *ill Example* to *Others*.

For tho' this be a *Sin* which has neither any *pleasure*, nor *profit*, to recommend it; nor should Men therefore, one would think, be apt to be tempted to it: Yet alas! Experience shews us, that even *Custom* it self is *alone* sufficient to propagate an *evil Practice*; and to prompt Men to do that themselves, which they see others do before them.

39. This is so just a Reflection, that it is, perhaps, the only account that can be given, how Men come to *swear* so *ordinarily*, and upon *such little Occasions*, as they do: In such *Cases*, where there is neither any manner of *need* of an *Oath* for the *confirmation* of what they *speak*; nor have they, often times, any such *design* in it. But it is a fashionable way of *adorning*, or rather of *profaning* their *Discourse*; the Practice of it is become almost Epidemical: And they have, insensibly, accustomed their Tongues to it, till at last they neither know how to avoid it, nor are themselves sensible when they do it.

40. So easily are Men brought to *profane* the *Name of God*! And such a mischievous Influence has the Practice of *common Swearing*, begun at first by a few profligate Men, had, to spread a general contempt of the Divine Majesty over the Face

of

of the Earth; and to weaken one of the most *sacred Bonds of Truth and Fidelity*, that was ever given to Mankind.

41. And this brings me to the next ill-effect, which this *customary Swearing* has had, in consequence of the *foregoing*: And that is,

(2^{dly}.) To take off from the *reverence* of an *Oath*, and from that due regard which ought to be had to it.

42. That *Perjury* is a Sin both too lightly consider'd, and too commonly practis'd among us; is too plainly seen, and has, I believe, been too sensibly felt likewise, by many of us, to suffer us to make any doubt of it. And how far the prevalence of *common*, and *vain Swearing*, may have contributed to *this Evil*, I shall leave it to every serious Christian to consider.

43. In the mean time, thus much is evident; that an *Oath*, from being one of the most *sacred* and *sure Bands of Faith* between Man and Man, is now become of very *little Benefit*, or *Security*, to us. Men take them without *fear*, and too often without *considering* what *they do*: And when they *have taken* them, they many times shew as little *regard* to them in their *Practice*, as they at first did *reverence* in approaching to them.

44. And, indeed, how should we expect that he who puts no value upon an *Oath* in his *common Talk*, should be much more concern'd for it, only by the addition of a little more *Solemnity*

to

to it? Or be afraid to break his Promise, or to dissemble the Truth, which he ratifies by an *appeal to God*, when *imposed* upon him; who has no regard to either, tho' he *swears* to them an hundred times of his *own accord*. Alas! an *Oath* is only terrible to a young Beginner: To him who considers what it is; and who has the fear of God's Knowledge, and Justice, still vigorous upon his Mind. But to him who *swears* every Hour that he lives; who Trafficks with it; and could not tell how to carry on his Business without it: Who *swears* with as little concern as he *talks*; and *values* an *Oath*, no more than he does a *common Lie*: What can we expect but that as such a *One's regard* to this *sacred Tie* is very *small*; so his *care* to answer the *End* of it should be proportionably *small* too?

45. To such a terrible height of wickedness is *common Swearing* apt to bring Men at the last! Nor does the *Evil* of it stop here; but,

(3^{dly}) And lastly: From the *particular Contempt* of an *Oath*, carries Men on, by degrees, to a *general Profaneness*; to an *unconcernedness* for, if not a *neglect* of, *whatsoever* is *sacred*.

46. And this is still but the *natural Progression* of this *Sin*; and the next Step to that I before mentioned. For since the *Honour* of God, and his *Power*, and *Justice*, are all *despised*, and that in a most outrageous manner, by the *Sin* of *Perjury*; so that a Man must have laid aside all *regard* to *these*, before he can harden himself to
the

the *Practice* of that: What should hinder him who is become so great a proficient in Wickedness as to be able to trample under foot the *Honour*, the *Power*, the *Justice*, and even the *Vengeance* of God too, in *one great Instance*; from proceeding, if need be, to do it as readily in *any other*?

47. That to *swear* is truly an *act of Religion*, and one of the most *solemn acts* of it; and most apt to stir up in our Minds a *fear of God*, and *reverence of his Name*; is not to be denied;

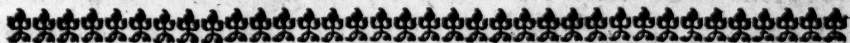
48. That to do this *lightly*, and *unadvisedly*; but especially to do it *falsely*; only to carry on our *own Designs*, or to promote our *own Interests*, at the expence of *God's Glory*; must be horridly to profane the *sacredness of an Oath*, and to *flee directly* in the *Face of God*, and *bid defiance to Damnation*; the necessary importance of an *Oath* will not suffer us to doubt.

49. Now when once Men are become so deeply rooted in Impiety as to be able to do this, what is there left to restrain them from a *general State of Profaneness and Irreligion*? It is but proceeding upon the same *Principles*, and doing that in the *other Instances of Religion*, which they do in this: And why they should not do so, if ever their *Passions*, or their *Interests*, should prompt them to it, I cannot see; and we need not question but that they will go on accordingly.

50. If therefore we have any regard to *God's Glory*; if any concern for our *own Souls*; let both

both these persuade us not to allow our selves in a *Practice* so *offensive* to the *one*, so *dangerous* to the *other*.

51. Let those *despise* the *sanctity* of an *Oath*, and *prostitute* it to a *common* and *profane Usage*; who know not how *sacred* a *Thing* it is, and how dangerous to indulge the *customary Practice* of it. But let it suffice us to take that liberty which our *blessed Lord* has left to us, as not only the most *safe*; but (in the general Affairs of Life,) *sufficient* too: And let us so much the rather content our selves with it, by how much the more plainly it appears from all those Considerations I have now been offering to you, *That whatsoever is more than that, cometh of evil*.



C H A P. V.

Wherein an enquiry is made into the Causes both of that Common, and False-Swearing, which so much abounds in the World: And some Directions are offer'd for the better prevention of both of them.

1. **I** Have now done with our *Saviour's Discourse*, relating to the Point of *Swearing*; and might with that, have reasonably enough concluded my Reflections upon *this Subject*. But
because

because there are some things which I could not so well refer to any of those *Heads* I have before *treated* of; which yet, I conceive, may usefully be observed by us upon this Occasion: I shall chuse rather to put them together a little out of place, than wholly to pass them by.

2. Now the Summ of what I would farther propose, for finishing of this whole Subject, may be reduced to two general Heads; Wherein

Ist. I will consider, how it comes to pass, that Men are so *forward* to *swear*, almost upon every Occasion; and too often venture, even to *for-swear* themselves.

And having given such an Account as may be necessary of this Matter, I will go on,

II^{dly}. To offer some particular *Directions*, for the better *Correction* and *Prevention* of both those *Evils*.

3. And, Ist. Let us consider, how it comes to pass, that after all our *Saviour* has said to the contrary; yet we see Men, nevertheless, so *forward* to *swear*, almost upon every Occasion; and too often venturing even to *for-swear* themselves.

4. In the Prosecution of which Enquiry, it is not my Intention to make any laborious Search into the *Causes* of that *Common-Swearing* which has so *universally*, almost, *obtain'd* in the *World*; and makes up a great part of Mens ordinary *Discourse*

course with one another. For tho' that be, without controversy, a very *grievous Sin*, yet is it withal a very *unaccountable* one. A *Sin* which Men commit to *serve* no *End*; to *gratify* no *Lust*; to *carry* on no *Business* by: Without *Profit*, without *Pleasure*; I had almost said, and without *Temptation*. In short; a *Sin* by which they *dishonour* God, and *ruin* their own *Souls*, to no purpose; but do the work of the Devil, without that common encouragement which, in most other Cases, he allows wicked Men, to reward their doing of it. So that for ought I know, the *best Account* that can be given, why Men ever fall into this *Sin* at all, is; that they have slipp'd into the *Habit* of it, they know not how: and *Custom* has made it a *fashionable Vice*. They look upon it as a *modish Way* of *Discourse*; and think it would bring an imputation upon their *Breeding*, if they should altogether forbear it: And render their Conversation *flat*, and *insipid*; for want of that *Profaneness*, which indeed is, many times, the only thing that is remarkable in it.

5. But this is not that *Swearing* I am now concern'd for: Nor do we find that our *Saviour* has had any regard for such *Sinners* as these. If Men will run into *evil Habits* without need, it is but fitting they should perish without pity: And not expect to be argued out of a *Vice*, which is so far from having any shew of *Reason* to *justify* it; that it has not so much as any *Temptation*, that may serve to make an *excuse* for it. The

Swearing I am now speaking of, is of another nature, and practised by a better sort of Men. By such as acknowledge the *Obligation*, tho' they do not sufficiently consider the *Sacredness* of an *Oath*: And for that reason allow themselves, on every little Occasion, to flee to the use of it; as long as they do but take care not to *confirm* any thing but what is *true* by it. And whence it comes to pass that so many, even among the higher rank of Christians, are yet thus *forward* to *swear*; is the first thing I proposed to enquire.

6. And here (1st.) It may be consider'd, that every one who has any sense of Probity remaining in him, *desires* to be *believed*, especially in what he *seriously affirms* or *denies*: And cannot but think it very hard to be suspected of any *falseness* and *untruth* in his *Discourse*. Besides that, often times, it may be of concern to him that he *should* be *believed*: And to leave his veracity in doubt, may prove not only to his disgrace, but to his damage also.

7. Now *Interest*, and *Reputation*, are two of the *dearest Things* in the World to most Men; and the Love of which they can the most hardly overcome. And therefore when *these* shall prompt a Man rather to *confirm* the *truth* of what he speaks with an *Oath*, than to run the hazard of suffering in *one*, or, it may be, in *both* of them; there had need be a deep sense of *Religion*, and a very awful dread of an *Oath* indeed, rooted in a Man's Heart, to keep him from so doing.

8. Let

8. Let us add to this, (2^{dly.}) That unreasonable *Jealousy* which abounds in Mankind towards each other; and moves them upon the least appearance of Reason; nay, and oftentimes without any, to *suspect one another*. Hence it is that if a *Matter* be but of never so little *importance*; if it be for a Man's *advantage*, or *disadvantage*; for his *pleasure*, or *trouble*, to be thoroughly convinced of it: It is seldom known that they will be satisfied with the *bare Word* of him who reports it unto them; or with any thing less, than his *Swearing* to the *Truth* of what he says. And if, out of *Conscience* to his *Duty*, and being *unwilling* to *break* in upon the *sacredness* of an *Oath*, he should chance to *refuse* so to do; it is great odds but he shall be *urged* and *provok'd* to it: And hardly avoid the censure of *speaking falsely*, from those, who having no respect for an *Oath* themselves, will not easily be persuaded that another should have any higher regard to it; or refuse to *swear* upon any other account than this, that he is conscious to himself that what he says is *false*; and therefore dares not *swear* to the *Truth* of it. And many there are, even among the better sort of Men, who by this means are betray'd into an undue usage of an *Oath*: And chuse rather to *swear*, when otherwise they would not do it, than to bear the *Reproaches* of those to whom they speak, by a *peremptory refusal* of it.

9. Again (3^{dly.}) To Men who have either no *true sense* at all of *Religion* upon their *Minds*;

or have not sufficiently consider'd the *Nature* of an *Oath*, and convinced themselves thereby how much the *Honour* of *God* is concern'd in our using of it; and how cautious we, therefore ought to be, upon what *Occasions* we do *swear*: The *customary forwardness* which we complain of in most Men to recur to *this way* of *confirming* what they say, may be, and (I believe) has been, a great *inducement*, to the over-easy *practice* of it.

10. There are few Christians so ignorant as not to know, that *Perjury* is a very *heinous Sin*, and such as may not be committed, without the *Peril* of *Salvation*. But yet there may be many who are still to learn, that to *swear* upon a *small occasion*, tho' a Man *swears* nothing but the *Truth*, is of its self *criminal*; and, as such, *forbidden* in the *Gospel*. Now such Persons as these, being sensible how usual it is for Men to do this, look no farther; but follow on as they see others go before them; nor feel any *remorse* of *Conscience* for doing that, which they never understood had any great harm in it.

11. And that which may possibly have contributed to confirm them in this practice is; that they see themselves call'd upon to *swear*, so very often, not only in their own *Private Concerns*, but even by *Publick Authority*. For since *Charity*, as well as *Duty*, obliges us to think that nothing is done by *that* but upon the most *mature deliberation*; and we know how great a number of *wise* and *good Men* must concur to the *making* of a *Law* with us; whose *wisdom* we cannot,
and

and whose *Piety* we *ought not* to doubt of: It is but reasonable to conclude, that they had certainly a *due regard* to the *Honour* of *God* in all their *Constitutions*; and would never require us to *swear* on any *occasion*, in which they esteem'd it either *unlawful*, or *unseemly*, for us to do it.

12. How far such Reasoning as this may have disposed some unwary Persons to *swear* more frequently, and upon *lesser Occasions*, than they ought to do, I cannot tell: But I think it may deserve to be consider'd, whether the *Multitude* of *Cases* wherein both our own *Laws*, and those of most other Countries, do *oblige*, or, at least, *allow* Men to *swear*; may not have somewhat contributed to that *forwardness* of doing it, which we see and complain of in them, upon other Occasions: And have disposed them to be more ready, than they ought to be, to *recur* to an *Oath* in such *Cases*, wherein there is neither any *command* of *Man*, nor any *excuse* before *God*, for their doing it.

13. I shall offer but one account more of this unwarrantable *readiness* of Men to *swear*; and that is (4^{thly}.) From the refusal which some, of late, have made of *all Swearing* whatsoever: And in *opposition* to whose *Error*, some may possibly have been so unwary as to run into the *contrary Extreme*; and to have concluded, that so far is it from being *unlawful* to *swear* in any *Case*, that, rather, there is *none* so *small* in which they may not freely do it.

14. It is the Infirmary of many, of more warmth than Judgment, that they are always in *Extremes*: And think the only way to secure themselves from Error, is to fly as far from it as they can. Not considering that there may be as little *reason* in *one Extreme*, as in *another*; and that, according to the old remark, *Truth*, as well as *Virtue*, is seldom found in *either*.

15. Thus some out of an over-eager opposition to *Popery*, have cast off *Episcopacy*; and for fear of *Superstition*, would have all *Decency* thrown out of the *Church*. And I verily believe we had not seen at this day so much *Profaneness* and *Irreligion* among us, had not the detestation of some Mens *Hypocritical Pretences* to *Godliness*, first prompted others to fly out into a *looseness* of *Living*, and from thence into a *neglect* of every thing that is *sacred*. And how far this Vice of *Common Swearing* may have gotten Grounds by the same Means, and have been improved too among the rest; I shall leave it to those who have consider'd, from what *Time* it has begun more especially to *prevail among us*, to determine.

16. Such therefore may, I suppose, have been the *Causes* of that *readiness* which we find in Men to *swear*, even upon the most *common*, and *unjustifiable*, *Occasions*. But now, as for the other *Sin* proposed, that of *Perjury*; I can scarcely tell to what *Cause* to ascribe the little Concern which many shew of *falling into that*; because, indeed, I can scarcely tell what *Cause* should

should be *sufficient* to *harden* their *Consciences* against it.

17. That the *frequency* of *Swearing*, and the *little Occasions* on which Men sometimes allow themselves in the *Practice* of it, may have very much taken off from their *Reverence* of an *Oath*, I can easily believe; and by that means have disposed them to *swear* more *carelessly*, and with *lesser consideration*, than they ought to do.

18. That by their *often*, and *careless Swearing*, they may probably sometimes have incurr'd the *Guilt* of *Perjury*, *unawares*; and by that means have been unhappily made acquainted with it; I do not doubt.

19. But yet still, to *swear falsely*, where a Man *knows* what he *does*; and *deliberately designs* so to do; this adds so much to *Common-Swearing*, and even to an *unwilling Perjury* also; that a Man ought to become a great *Proficient* in *Wickedness*, before he can bring his *Mind* to it.

20. This therefore is a *Sin* which I can ascribe to no other *Cause* than that of a *profane Heart*, and a *hardned Conscience*. Whether it be that a Man falls into it through an *absolute Infidelity*; or that by a *long, habitual continuance* in *Sin*, he is at last become *deprived* of *God's Grace*, and is given up to be *led Captive by Satan at his Will*. For otherwise, *Perjury* is a *Crime* of so detestable a *Nature*, and which has so much of the *falseness* of the *Devil* in it; that were there but any *Spark* of *Piety* remaining in the *Soul*, it were impossible a Man should ever be persuaded

to *commit* it: Or having *once committed* it, should be able to endure his own Torments; much less should ever return to the Commission of it again.

21. I shall therefore seek no farther for the *Cause* of this *Sin*; but shall confidently conclude, that the *Habit* of it can proceed from nothing less than an *utter Dereliction of God*, and an *Extinction of all Sense of Good and Evil* in the *Soul*.

22. Which being thus resolved; let us now go on,

II^{dly}. To consider, what *directions* may be offer'd for the *correction* of these great *Evils*.

23. And 1st: For what concerns the Point of *Perjury*; as I have now shewn, that a Man must be arrived to an extraordinary pitch of *Wickedness*, before he can *allow* himself in the *commission* of it; so I know no way there is to draw Men off from that, but only to *awaken* their *Consciences*, if it may be, to a serious *consideration* of their *Sins*; and by that Means to bring them to a sincere *Conversion* from them.

24. Indeed could even Charity its self warrant us to think that it were possible for Men to be so far deluded, as not to know *False-Swearing*, I do not say to be a *Sin*, but to be a most *heinous* and *damnable Offence*; such a *Sin* for which God has no *Pity*; and it may almost be question'd whether he will afford Men his *Grace* for *Repentance* of it; there might then be also some *hope*, that by a better *Information* of their *Judgments*,

ments, as to this Matter, they might perhaps be reclaimed from it.

25. But when such is the *Notoriousness* of this *Crime*, that 'tis impossible any one should fall into it without *knowing* that he does at the same time *defy God*, and *make a mock of Damnation*; we must conclude that 'tis in vain to hope by any *particular Applications* to correct this *Evil*: And that we must resolve either to reduce such a Person to a *general sense* of *Piety* and *Virtue*; or to leave him in the *guilt* of *this*, as well as under the *power* of his *other sins*.

26. And this, I say, as to what concerns the Point of *moral Conviction* and *Persuasion*. For, otherwise, one Method there is, and 'tis the only one I can imagine, by which a stop may be put to the Practice of *this*, without meddling with a Man's *other Sins*; and that is, by a *strict Execution* of *humane Justice* upon him: And which out of Charity to our Neighbour's Soul, as well as out of Duty to God, and with Regard to the Publick Welfare; it is great pity but all Magistrates should, with all possible vigour and severity, do.

27. How much the Welfare of Mankind is concern'd in the *suppressing* of *False-Swearing*, I need not say: And what Provision our own *Laws* have made for the better effecting of it, cannot be unknown to those who are intrusted with the Administration of them, and who are

• See the Stat. V Eliz. ch. 9.

especially concern'd to take notice of it. Let me only beg leave earnestly to recommend it to all such, so far to consider the great *Trust* which is *reposed* in them; and what an *Interest* every *honest Member* of the *Common-wealth* has to demand their Care in this, more than in most other *Sins* committed to their Censure; as not to admit of any Excuses, nor to shew any Favour, to such Malefactors: Who if, by this means they shall be brought to a true *Sense* of *their Sin*, and to *Repentance* for it; will then think themselves *Gainers* by their *Prosecution*; and if they shall not, I am sure cannot, by our *Laws*, be too *severely punish'd* for it.

28. But, 2^{dly}; As for the other sort of *Swearing* forbidden by our *Saviour*, yet too easily indulged by many Christians: Whether it be that of their *common Discourse*, where there is *no need at all* of it; or in the *Prosecution* of their *ordinary Affairs*, in which there is *no sufficient Occasion* for it; many are the *Directions* that may be offer'd for the *Prevention* of such a *Practice*, proportionable to the several *Principles* upon which Men may be prompted to *allow* themselves in the *Use* of it.

29. For (1st) Should they chance to go on in such *Swearing*, for want of being convinced of the *Danger*, and *Unreasonableness*, of it; the surest way, in this Case, to draw them off from their *Practice* of it, will be to shew them how *expresly* it has been *forbidden* by our *Saviour*? What an *affront* it puts upon the *Majesty* of *God*?

God? And how *indecent* a Thing it is, (were there nothing else to be said against it) to *call* the Great Lord of Heaven and Earth to witness, on such *silly* and *trivial* Occasions, as such Persons cannot but acknowledge, they very often do.

30. But (2^{dly}.) Tho' possibly Men may know, in the general, that *thus* to *swear* is not *convenient*; yet still they may neglect to take all that *Care* and *Pains* with themselves, that is necessary for the intire avoiding of it, because they are not sufficiently persuaded, how great the *sinfulness* of it is. This is, I believe, the real Case with very many: And if so, then 'tis plain that here again the best way to draw them off from this *evil Custom*, will be to convince them of the mighty *Danger*, and *Malignity*, of it. To shew them, that thus to *swear*, is not, as they may imagine, some *light* and *ordinary* Offence; nor will be pass'd over by God, as such. That to *swear*, is to *appeal* to God: And if that be done without great *care*, and a suitable *occasion* for it, we shall put such an *affront* upon Him, as we would be ashamed to put upon one of our *fellow Creatures*, and would not endure that any should put upon *our selves*.

31. These and the like Considerations, if plainly urged, and seriously laid to Heart; can hardly fail of convincing any rational person of the *sinfulness* of this *Practice*. And having done that, they must, in the consequence of it, oblige him to *correct* it too; if he be truly such an one as we
now

now suppose him to be, *viz.* an *honest* and *upright Christian*.

32. But (3^{dly}.) Should not this be the Case; but the Person who is engaged in this *evil Habit* should be one who pursues this *Swearing* not so much out of any *particular ignorance* of, or *unconcernedness* for, the *sacredness* of an *Oath*; as out of a *general levity* of *Mind* and *insensibility* of his *Duty*: Then it will not be sufficient to argue with him, concerning the *Nature* and *Importance* of an *Oath*, and with what *care* and *circumspection* we ought to approach to the taking of it: But we must proceed with such a one in a more *general Way*; and bring him to *reverence* an *Oath*, by teaching him to be more *considerate*; and to have a greater value for all the other *Acts* of *Religion*.

33. Such a Person as this, as he does not *prophane God's Name* out of any particular disregard which he has for an *Oath*, more than for any other thing of the like nature; so neither must he be brought off from the doing of it, by any particular Considerations relating to the *sacredness* of an *Oath*; but must be persuaded, in the general, to become *serious* and *devout*; to *honour God*, and to pay a *due respect* to every thing that *relates* to him: And this will compose his *Thoughts*, and influence his *Affections* in *all* the *Offices* of *Religion*; and in *this Particular* among the rest.

34. But now (4^{thly}.) and to go yet higher: What if the Person who thus *swears*, should not
only

only be more *careless* and *inconsiderate*, than he ought to be, in the Business of *Religion*; but should, by Principle, be become a *despiser* of it? What if he be one who *believes* not in *any God at all*; but laughs at all our Talk either of a *Providence* here, or of a *Judgment* hereafter?

35. Tho' in this Case, as in the foregoing, the best way to *reclaim* such a one's *Common Swearing*, would be to convince him of his *Errors*; and, by so doing, to cut off the *first Cause* of this *Irregularity*: Yet till that shall be done, somewhat, I think, may fairly be offer'd, upon his own *Principles*, to restrain this *Vice*, without meddling with any of his others.

36. For, indeed, how foolish and ridiculous a thing must it be for such a one, (if he be in good earnest,) by *Swearing*, to *appeal* to *God*, who professes to *believe none*; or at least none that has any *concern for*, or *knowledge of*, what we *do here below*? How *absurd*, for him to refer himself to the *censure* of a *future Judgment*, who would be thought not to *own* any *State* at all after *this* in which we *now live*; nor, by consequence, to *revere* any such *final Inquest*.

37. Or if in all this he only acts a part; how *base* and *dis-ingenuous* must he then shew himself to be; to *offer* an *Oath* for the *confirmation* of what he *promises* or *asserts*; who neither believes any *Obligation* to be *thereby* laid upon him to *deal* ever the *more sincerely* for it; nor can have any design in *Swearing*, but only to *impose*
upon

upon the *Credulity*, and to *ridicule* the *Religion* of his *Neighbour*?

38. Whether therefore Men acknowledge the *Principles* of *Religion* or no, yet certainly *common Justice* and *Honesty*; nay, or even *Honour* its self, (which with some Men is of greater *Authority* than both;) should make them ashamed to *swear*, in any Matter, for the confirmation of the Truth of what they speak: Because they know, in their own hearts, that they do but impose thereby upon those with whom they deal by the *shew* of an *Obligation*; which how great soever it may be to others, yet to them is of no *force*; nor lays any *restraint* at all upon them. And as for their *ordinary Conversation*; since to *swear* in that, is to *prophane* the *Name* of a *God*, whom other Men do *believe* in, tho' they themselves do not; and which they cannot therefore but think must be very *ungrateful* and *offensive* to them: Methinks even *Civility*, and *Good Manners*, should teach them to forbear such *Oaths*, if not for the perpetual *Contradiction* which they thereby run into, as to their *own Principles*, yet at least for that *affront* which they know they put upon *other Mens*.

39. These then are the *Ways* by which Men are to be drawn off from their *customary* and *profane Swearing*, upon the *Principles* of *Reason* and *Religion*. There is yet (5^{thly}.) Another Method, which the *Care* and *Piety* of our *Laws* has set before us, and which it is to be hoped shall

shall now, at length, be made use of in order to this end; and that is, by a strict Exaction of that *Penalty*, which they have order'd to be inflicted upon such *Offenders*, for the *restraining* of their *Profaneness*: And which how small soever it may seem to be, and in truth is, in comparison of the Sin of *taking God's Name in vain*; yet, being duly required, might go very far towards the *prevention* of it.

40. It is true there was somewhat of this kind ^b long before attempted; and which one would have hoped should have kept this *Sin* from becoming so *common*, or rather so *universal*, as it is, among us. But alas! What can the best *Laws* do, if they are never put in Execution? And how little *that Law* has, of late Years, been either *published*, or *executed*, as it ought to have been; is a *Reflection* that may deserve the *Consideration* of many among us.

41. In the mean time we all know how that ancient, and almost antiquated *Law*, is not only *revived*, but *improved* too, in order to *this End*: And such care taken, that if we would but heartily set our selves to it, I cannot but think we should soon put an end to a great part of that *profane Swearing*, that has of late so scandalously prevailed among us.

42. And to engage us so to do, give me leave to say but this one thing; that for any of us to *neglect* our *Duty* in this *Particular*; is, in effect,

^b See the Stat. of 21 Jac. I. ch. 20.

to *consent* to every such *Act*, as we refuse to *bring to light*. It is to *abet* the *taking of God's Name in vain*: And then let us fear lest we share in the *Punishment*, as we do partake in the *Guilt* of it.

43. But (6^{thly}.) and to conclude these *Reflections*: As it is certain nothing has more contributed to the *Practice* both of *False-Swearing*, and of *Common-Swearing*, among us, than the want of that due *reverence* Men ought to have of an *Oath*; so I know no way more likely to *reclaim Men* from the *Practice* of *both*, than to endeavour, as far as may be, to restore the *Use* of an *Oath* to its just *Veneration*; and to bring Men, if it be possible, to a more *sacred Esteem* of it. And in order thereunto, as it is certainly the *Duty of private Persons*, never to *swear at all*, but when some more than ordinary *Occasion* shall require their doing of it; so were it much to be wish'd, that the *Necessities of Government* would permit, that an *Oath* should never be *imposed* upon, nor *required* of any, but upon some *greater Exigence*; to be sure, more *seldom* than now it is. And that when it is required, such care should be taken in *administring* of it, as to raise in mens minds a serious consideration of what they are about: At least that it should be so done, as not to prompt them to a *dis-esteem* of it; through an *over-hasty*, and *irreverent dispensing* of this great *Obligation*.

44. And thus have I shewn, by what *Means*, if by any, not only *Perjury*, but *Common* and
Profane

Profane-Swearing, may be most like to be corrected and suppress'd. And for *Engagements* to move every one of us to use our best Endeavour in the accomplishment of so good and profitable a *Design*; I shall only add thus much to what I have already offer'd, in the prosecution of this *Subject*; that if we have any *Regard* to God's *Honour*; if any *Concern* for our own *Souls*; if any *Zeal* for the *publick Good*; all these call upon us to do, what in us lies, to *reform* both our *selves*, and *others*, as to this Matter.

45. That by *Common* and *Customary*, but especially by *False-Swearing*, God's *Majesty* is *abused*, and his *Wrath* and *Vengeance* very eminently *provoked*; the necessary *relation* which every *Oath* has to him, sufficiently speaks.

46. That therefore by such Practices, *Mens Souls* must be greatly *endanger'd*; both the *Denunciations* of God against such *Offenders*, and the *Quality* of the *Sins* themselves, effectually assure us. But especially by the *Sin* of *Perjury*; which, it may be, is of all others a *Sin* the most hard to be *forgiven*; because it is the most hard for any one, according to the *Principles* of *Christianity*, sufficiently to repent of it.

47. Indeed were a bare *Conversion* towards God enough to wash away the guilt of it; a Man might by God's *Grace*, be brought to such a deep *sense* of his *Sin*, and to so *heartly* a *Contrition* for it, as to deliver himself from the *Danger* of

it. But if by our *Perjury* we should chance not only to have abused the Majesty of God, but to have ruined our *Neighbour* too; Should have robb'd him of his *Estate*, his *Reputation*, or even of his very *Life* its self; and in none of all which we can make him any tolerable *Compensation*: How can we ever hope that God will be reconciled to us, whilst we lie under such an utter Incapacity of making an *amends* to our *Neighbour*?

48. And then, lastly, For the *Interest* which the *Publick* has in the *Suppression* of such *Swearing*; I have already shewn that *Truth* and *Fidelity*, are the great *Bases* on which all *Society* is founded; and without which there could be no *Peace*, no *Security*, no *Right*, or *Property*, in the *World*. And therefore whatsoever is in any wise apt to *undermine these*; (as *Perjury* directly does, and as *Common-Swearing* naturally tends to do;) ought to be avoided and discouraged by all who either love their own *Welfare*, or have any regard to the *publick Good*.

I shall conclude this whole Discourse with that Exhortation of St. *James*, which I have so often referr'd to in it; *James* v. 12. *Above all things, my Brethren, Swear not: Neither by Heaven, neither by the Earth; neither by any other Oath: But let your Yea, be Yea; and your Nay, Nay; lest ye fall into Condemnation.*

F I N I S.

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